


# Council



St Edmundsbury  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Tuesday 13 June 2017</b>
<b>Time:</b>	<b>7.00 pm</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Conference Chamber West Suffolk House</b> Western Way Bury St Edmunds IP33 3YU
<b>Membership:</b>	<p><b>All Councillors</b></p> <p>You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to transact the business on the agenda set out below.</p>  <p><b>Ian Gallin</b> <b>Chief Executive</b> <b>5 June 2017</b></p>
<p>The Meeting will be opened with Prayers by the Mayor's Chaplain, The Venerable Dr David Jenkins, Archdeacon of Sudbury. (Note: Those Members not wishing to be present for prayers should remain in the Members' Breakout Area and will be summoned at the conclusion of prayers.)</p>	
<b>Interests – Declaration and Restriction on Participation:</b>	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest not entered in the Authority's register or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda (subject to the exception for sensitive information) and to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on an item in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
<b>Committee administrator:</b>	<p><b>Claire Skoyles</b> Democratic Services Officer <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757176 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:claire.skoyles@westsuffolk.gov.uk">claire.skoyles@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>

# Public Information



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Venue:</b>	<b>Conference Chamber West Suffolk House</b> Western Way Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP33 3YU	Tel: 01284 757176 Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Web: <a href="http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk">www.westsuffolk.gov.uk</a>
<b>Access to agenda and reports before the meeting:</b>	Copies of the agenda and reports are open for public inspection at the above address at least five clear days before the meeting. They are also available to view on our website.	
<b>Attendance at meetings:</b>	The Borough Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public.	
<b>Public questions:</b>	<p>Members of the public may ask questions of Members of the Cabinet or any Committee Chairman at ordinary meetings of the Council. 30 minutes will be set aside for persons in the public gallery who live or work in the Borough to ask questions about the work of the Council. 30 minutes will also be set aside for questions at special or extraordinary meetings of the Council, but must be limited to the business to be transacted at that meeting.</p> <p>A person who wishes to speak must register at least fifteen minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start. This can be done online by sending the request to <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a> or telephoning 01284 757176 or in person by telling the committee administrator present at the meeting.</p> <p>Written questions, detailing the full question to be asked, may be submitted by members of the public to the Service Manager (Democratic Services) no later than 10.00 am on the previous working day to the meeting of the Council. Email: <a href="mailto:democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk">democratic.services@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a> Phone: 01284 757162</p>	
<b>Disabled access:</b>	<p>West Suffolk House has facilities for people with mobility impairments including a lift and wheelchair accessible WCs. However in the event of an emergency use of the lift is restricted for health and safety reasons.</p> <p>Visitor parking is at the car park at the front of the building and there are a number of accessible spaces.</p>	
<b>Induction loop:</b>	An Induction loop is available for meetings held in the Conference Chamber.	
<b>Recording of meetings:</b>	<p>The Council may record this meeting and permits members of the public and media to record or broadcast it as well (when the media and public are not lawfully excluded).</p> <p>Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Committee Administrator who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.</p>	

# Agenda

## Procedural Matters

**Page No**

**1. Minutes**

**1 - 16**

To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on:

- 25 April 2017
- 18 May 2017 (Special Meeting of Council)
- 18 May 2017 (Annual Meeting of Council)

(copies attached)

**2. Mayor's announcements**

**3. Apologies for Absence**

To receive announcements (if any) from the officer advising the Mayor (including apologies for absence)

**4. Declarations of Interests**

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any pecuniary or local non pecuniary interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda **no later than when that item is reached** and, when appropriate, to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.

## Part 1 - Public

**5. Leader's Statement**

**17 - 18**

Paper No: **COU/SE/17/008**

**(Council Procedure Rules 8.1 – 8.3)** Members may ask the Leader questions on the content of both his introductory remarks and the written statement itself.

A total of 30 minutes will be allowed for questions and responses. There will be a limit of five minutes for each question to be asked and answered. A supplementary question arising from the reply may be asked so long as the five minute limit is not exceeded.

**6. Public Participation**

**(Council Procedure Rules Section 6)** Members of the public who live or work in the Borough are invited to put one question of not more than five minutes duration. A person who wishes to speak must register at least fifteen minutes before the time the meeting is scheduled to start.\*

(Note: The maximum time to be set aside for this item is 30 minutes, but if all questions are dealt with sooner, or if there are no questions, the Council will proceed to the next business.

Each person may ask **one** question only. A total of **five minutes will be allowed for the question to be put and answered.** One further question will be allowed arising directly from the reply, **provided that the original time limit of five minutes is not exceeded.**

**Written questions** may be submitted by members of the public to the Service Manager (Democratic Services) **no later than 10.00 am on Monday 12 June 2017.** The written notification should **detail the full question** to be asked at the meeting of the Council.)\*

\*For further information, see Public Information Sheet attached to this agenda.

**7. Referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet and committees**

**(A) Referrals from Extraordinary Cabinet: 30 May 2017**

(There are no direct referrals emanating from the extraordinary joint Cabinet meeting held with Forest Heath District Council on 30 May 2017. Reference to the consideration of matters held at that meeting on 'The Future of Local Government in west Suffolk' is contained within the separate report (COU/SE/17/009: 'A Single Council for west Suffolk - draft business case') at Agenda Item 8 on this Council agenda.)

**(B) Referrals from Cabinet: 31 May 2017**

(There are no referrals emanating from the Cabinet meeting held on 31 May 2017.)

- |                                                                                      |                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>8. A Single Council for west Suffolk - draft business case</b>                    | <b>19 - 56</b> |
| Report No: <b>COU/SE/17/009</b>                                                      |                |
| <b>9. Response to Network Rail's Proposed Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Order</b> | <b>57 - 68</b> |
| Report No: <b>COU/SE/17/010</b>                                                      |                |
| <b>10. Appointment of Independent Persons</b>                                        | <b>69 - 72</b> |
| Report No: <b>COU/SE/17/011</b>                                                      |                |

## 11. Representation on Suffolk County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Council is asked to nominate one Member and one substitute Member to serve on Suffolk County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These Members should ideally be from the Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, although this is not essential as the necessary training will be given by the County Council.

The Committee, on 7 June 2017, will consider nominations for a representative and a substitute Member for 2017/2018. The current Members on this joint body are Councillor Paul Hopfensperger as the nominated representative and Councillor Margaret Marks as the nominated substitute.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that Councillor (to be reported verbally\*) be nominated as the Borough Council's representative and Councillor (to be reported verbally\*) as the nominated substitute Member on the Suffolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2017/2018.

*\* Nominations to be verbally reported by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny(O&S) Committee as a result of the O&S Committee meeting being held after the Council agenda has been published.*

## 12. Questions to Committee Chairmen

Members are invited to ask questions of committee Chairmen on business transacted by their committees since the last ordinary meeting of Council on 25 April 2017.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Dates of meetings</b>
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Diane Hind	19 April 2017 7 June 2017
Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Sarah Broughton	25 May 2017
Development Control Committee	Cllr Jim Thorndyke	3 May 2017 1 June 2017

## 13. Urgent Questions on Notice

The Council will consider any urgent questions on notice that were notified to the Service Manager (Democratic Services) by 11am on the day of the meeting.

### **Part 2 – Exempt**

**NONE**

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# Council



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of a meeting of the **Council** held on  
**Tuesday 25 April 2017 at 7.00 pm** in the **Conference Chamber, West**  
**Suffolk House**, Western Way, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3YU

Present: **Councillors**

**Mayor** Julia Wakelam  
**Deputy Mayor** Terry Clements

Trevor Beckwith	Paul Hopfensperger	Richard Rout
Sarah Broughton	Ian Houlder	Andrew Smith
Tony Brown	Margaret Marks	Andrew Speed
Carol Bull	Betty Mclatchy	Clive Springett
John Burns	Ivor Mclatchy	Sarah Stamp
Patrick Chung	Jane Midwood	Peter Stevens
Bob Cockle	Sara Mildmay-White	Peter Thompson
Robert Everitt	Clive Pollington	Jim Thorndyke
Paula Fox	Alaric Pugh	Frank Warby
Susan Glossop	Joanna Rayner	Patricia Warby
John Griffiths	Karen Richardson	Anthony Williams
Diane Hind	David Roach	
Beccy Hopfensperger	Barry Robbins	

## 235. Prayers

The Mayor's Chaplain, the Very Reverend Canon Mark Hackeson of St Edmunds' Church, opened the meeting with prayers.

## 236. Introductions

Prior to the commencement of formal business, the Mayor formally welcomed Leah Mickleborough and Mark Miller to their first Council meeting. Mrs Mickleborough and Mr Miller had recently been appointed to the posts of Service Managers for Democratic Services (and Monitoring Officer) and Strategic Communications respectively, for Forest Heath District and St Edmundsbury Borough Councils.

## 237. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**238. Mayor's announcements**

The Mayor reported on the civic engagements and charity activities which she and her Consort and the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress had attended since the last ordinary meeting of Council held on 21 February 2017.

**239. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simon Brown, Jason Crooks, Jeremy Farthing, Wayne Hailstone, David Nettleton and Angela Rushen.

**240. Declarations of Interests**

Members declarations of interest were recorded under the item to which the declaration related.

**241. Leader's Statement**

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, presented his statement as contained in Report No: COU/SE/17/006.

In addition to his statement, Councillor Griffiths also wished to pay his own respects to Councillor Julia Wakelam, and commended her on the exemplary way she had conducted the role as Mayor of the Council over the past year.

In response to a question regarding the increasing pressures that the Council was facing on its limited accommodation for homeless people, Councillor Sara Mildmay-White (at the request of Councillor Griffiths) explained the work and engagement which was being undertaken, particularly in relation to the rough/street sleepers within the Town. Councillor Mildmay-White particularly referred to the successful bid to DCLG for a rough sleeper outreach worker across localities within St Edmundsbury, Forest Heath, Babergh and Mid-Suffolk. This worker should help to reduce homelessness by providing a point of contact for individuals at risk of becoming homeless or who were at the point of homelessness, whilst also having a role in linking agencies and the Council's partners to help prevent homelessness in the first place.

**242. Public Participation**

No members of the public in attendance wished to speak.

**243. Referrals report of recommendations from Cabinet**

*(Prior to the consideration of this report, the following Councillors declared local non-pecuniary interests:*

*Councillor John Burns His business was deemed to be in competition with Abbeycroft Leisure*

*Councillor Terry Clements Trustee of Abbeycroft Leisure (this was an appointment made by St Edmundsbury Borough Council)*



*Councillor Richard Rout*

*His business was deemed to be in competition with Abbeycroft Leisure*

*Councillor Burns, Clements and Rout remained in the meeting for the consideration of this item and also participated in the voting thereon)*

Council considered the Referrals report of Recommendations from Cabinet contained within Report No: COU/SE/17/007.

**(A) Referrals from Cabinet: 28 March 2017**

1. Development of a New Partnership Agreement with Abbeycroft Leisure

Approval was sought for a new Partnership Agreement to be entered into with Abbeycroft Leisure Ltd for a period of 15 years (with options to extend for 5 + 5 years).

Councillor Joanna Rayner, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, drew relevant issues to the attention of Council, including thanking both Members and Officers for the work which had been undertaken in achieving this proposed new Partnership Agreement.

Councillors Terry Clements and Margaret Marks also both wished to commend the staff and services delivered by Abbeycroft Leisure.

On the motion of Councillor Rayner, seconded by Councillor Clive Springett, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

- (1) A new Partnership Agreement be entered into with Abbeycroft Leisure Ltd for a period of 15 years, with options to extend for 5 + 5 years, subject to the protections included in the Partnership Agreement; and
- (2) The Partnership Agreement be finalised in line with Report No: CAB/FH/17/019 and the Heads of Terms attached at Appendix 1.

**244. Questions to Committee Chairmen**

Council considered a narrative item, which sought questions of Committee Chairmen on business transacted since the last ordinary meeting of Council on 21 February 2017, as outlined below:

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Dates of meetings</b>
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Diane Hind	15 March 2017
Development Control Committee	Cllr Jim Thorndyke	2 March 2017 6 April 2017

No questions were asked of the above Chairmen.

245. **Urgent Questions on Notice**

No urgent questions on notice had been received.

246. **Report on Special Urgency**

The Leader reported that no executive decisions had been taken under the Special Urgency provisions of the Constitution.

The Meeting concluded at 7.35 pm

**Signed by:**

**Mayor**

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# Special Council



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of a **Special Meeting** of the **Council** held on  
**Thursday 18 May 2017 at 12.00 pm** in the **Auditorium, The Apex,**  
Charter Square, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3FD

Present: **Councillors**

**Mayor** Julia Wakelam  
**Deputy Mayor** Terry Clements

Sarah Broughton	Diane Hind	Karen Richardson
Tony Brown	Beccy Hopfensperger	Barry Robbins
Carol Bull	Paul Hopfensperger	Richard Rout
Patrick Chung	Ian Houlder	Andrew Smith
Bob Cockle	Margaret Marks	Andrew Speed
Jason Crooks	Betty Mclatchy	Clive Springett
Robert Everitt	Ivor Mclatchy	Sarah Stamp
Susan Glossop	Sara Mildmay-White	Peter Stevens
John Griffiths	Alaric Pugh	Frank Warby
Wayne Hailstone	Joanna Rayner	Patricia Warby

**By Invitation:**

The Very Reverend Canon Mark Hackeson, Mayor's Chaplain

**247. Procession from Moyses Hall Museum to The Apex**

At approximately 11.45 am, headed by the Sword and Mace Bearers, the Mayor and the majority of Members present processed from Moyses Hall Museum to The Apex in Bury St Edmunds. They were accompanied by the Chief Executive, Mayor's Chaplain and the Service Manager (Democratic Services).

At 11.57 am, the procession entered the auditorium of The Apex and the Mayor invited the Mayor's Chaplain, the Very Reverend Canon Mark Hackeson of St Edmunds' Church, to open the meeting with prayers.

**248. Remembrance**

A minute's silence was held in remembrance for the late Borough Councillor Angela Rushen; and also for the late Forest Heath District Councillor Bill Sadler and the Leader of Waveney District Council, Councillor Colin Law.

249. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Trevor Beckwith, Simon Brown, John Burns, Jeremy Farthing, Paula Fox, Jane Midwood, David Nettleton, Clive Pollington, David Roach, Jim Thorndyke and Anthony Williams.

Councillor Peter Thompson was absent.

It was noted that Councillor Burns was present in the auditorium; however, as he was filming the proceedings, he could not take part in the vote on the motions proposed.

250. **Conferment of Honorary Freedom of the Borough: HMS Vengeance**

The Mayor read out the terms of the resolution for conferring the Honorary Freedom of the Borough on HMS Vengeance, as follows:

**That this Council**, in recognition of the eminent services rendered by **HMS Vengeance** of BFPO 421, HM Naval Base, Clyde, Helensburgh, Argyle and Bute, and her Commanding Officer, Officers and Crew for 17 years' affiliation with and outstanding service to the Borough of St Edmundsbury.

**Further**, for their significant contribution to the civic life of the Borough and their active support to the voluntary sector.

**Do hereby**, in pursuance of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 and in acknowledgement of the services aforesaid, confer upon the said **HMS Vengeance** the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Edmundsbury; and

**do hereby** admit the said **HMS Vengeance** to be an Honorary Freeman of the Borough accordingly.

On the motion of Councillor Margaret Marks, seconded by Councillor John Griffiths, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Council confer upon HMS Vengeance of BFPO 421, HM Naval Base, Clyde, Helensburgh, Argyle and Bute, the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Edmundsbury in the terms of the formal motion now read by the Mayor and set out in the Agenda, and the Mayor present an illuminated copy of the resolution to Commander Neil Lamont RN of HMS Vengeance.

Commander Neil Lamont, on behalf of the new Honorary Freeman, subscribed to the Roll of Honorary Freeman of the Borough and the Mayor presented an illuminated copy of the resolution and award.

Cdr Lamont then acknowledged the admission of the said HMS Vengeance.

251. **Conferment of Honorary Freedom of the Borough: TS St Edmund (Mayor's Own) Sea Cadet Corps**

The Mayor read out the terms of the resolution for conferring the Honorary Freedom of the Borough on TS St Edmund (Mayor's Own) Sea Cadet Corps, as follows:

**That this Council**, in recognition of the eminent services rendered by **TS St Edmund (Mayor's Own) Sea Cadet Corps** of Klondyke, Beetons Way, Bury St Edmunds who have dedicated 72 years affiliation with and outstanding service to the Borough of St Edmundsbury.

**Further**, for their significant contribution to the civic life of the Borough of St Edmundsbury and their active support in helping the local young people move towards responsible adulthood using a nautical theme based on the customs of the Royal Navy.

**Do hereby**, in pursuance of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972 and in acknowledgement of the services aforesaid, confer upon the said **TS St Edmund (Mayor's Own) Sea Cadet Corps** the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Edmundsbury; and

**do hereby** admit the said **TS St Edmund (Mayor's Own) Sea Cadet Corps** to be an Honorary Freeman of the Borough accordingly.

On the motion of Councillor Margaret Marks, seconded by Councillor John Griffiths, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Council confer upon TS St Edmund (Mayor's Own) Sea Cadet Corps of Klondyke, Beetons Way, Bury St Edmunds, the Honorary Freedom of the Borough of St Edmundsbury in the terms of the formal motion now read by the Mayor and set out in the Agenda, and the Mayor present an illuminated copy of the resolution to Commanding Officer Lieutenant Daniel Davis of TS St Edmund (Mayor's Own) Sea Cadet Corps.

Commanding Officer Lieutenant Daniel Davis, on behalf of the new Honorary Freeman, subscribed to the Roll of Honorary Freeman of the Borough and the Mayor presented an illuminated copy of the resolution and award.

CO Lt Davis then acknowledged the admission of the said TS St Edmund (Mayor's Own) Sea Cadet Corps.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm

**Signed by:**

**Mayor**

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# Annual Council



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes** of the **Annual Meeting** of **Council** held on  
**Thursday 18 May 2017** at **12.30 pm** in the **Auditorium, The Apex**, Charter  
Square, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 3FD

Present: **Councillors**

**Mayor** Julia Wakelam  
**Deputy Mayor** Terry Clements

Sarah Broughton	Beccy Hopfensperger	Richard Rout
Tony Brown	Paul Hopfensperger	Andrew Smith
Carol Bull	Ian Houlder	Andrew Speed
John Burns ( <i>for Part II only</i> )	Margaret Marks	Clive Springett
Patrick Chung	Betty Mclatchy	Sarah Stamp
Bob Cockle ( <i>for Part I only</i> )	Ivor Mclatchy	Peter Stevens
Jason Crooks	Sara Mildmay-White	Peter Thompson ( <i>for Part II only</i> )
Robert Everitt	David Nettleton ( <i>for Part II only</i> )	Jim Thorndyke ( <i>for Part II only</i> )
Susan Glossop	Alaric Pugh	Frank Warby
John Griffiths	Joanna Rayner	Patricia Warby
Wayne Hailstone	Karen Richardson	
Diane Hind	Barry Robbins	

**By Invitation:**

The Very Reverend Canon Mark Hackeson, outgoing Mayor's Chaplain  
(*for Part I only*)

The Venerable Dr David Jenkins, incoming Mayor's Chaplain

252. **Election of Mayor**

On the motion of Councillor Paul Hopfensperger and seconded by Councillor Frank Warby, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That Terry Clements, a Councillor of the Borough, be and is hereby elected Mayor for the ensuing year.

The Mayor took the Chair, signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and acknowledged his election.

## 253. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the following Councillors for the parts of the meeting as indicated:

- **Part I (Ceremonial Business) only:** Councillors John Burns, David Nettleton and Jim Thorndyke
- **Part II (Procedural Business) only:** Councillor Bob Cockle
- **Both Parts I (Ceremonial Business) and II (Procedural Business):** Councillors Trevor Beckwith, Simon Brown, Jeremy Farthing, Paula Fox, Jane Midwood, Clive Pollington, David Roach and Anthony Williams.

Councillor Peter Thompson was absent from Part I, but present for Part II.

It was noted that Councillor Burns was present in the auditorium; however, as he was filming the proceedings, he could not take part in the vote on the motions proposed during Part I (ceremonial business).

## 254. **Mayor's communications**

### (a) Appointment of Mayor's Chaplain

The Mayor announced that he would be appointing as his Chaplain the Venerable Dr David Jenkins, Archdeacon of Sudbury.

### (b) Civic Service

The Mayor reported that he had arranged for the Civic Service this year to be held at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, on Sunday 4 June 2017 at 3.30 pm. At 3.00 pm, the civic procession will be led by a parade of TS St Edmund (Mayor's Own) Sea cadet Corps, to commemorate their admission to the Honorary Freedom of the Borough.

## 255. **Vote of Thanks to the Retired Mayor and Consort**

On the motion of Councillor Robert Everitt, seconded by Councillor John Griffiths, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Council, in recognising the most able and diligent manner in which the retired Mayor, Councillor Julia Wakelam, has carried out the duties of Mayor of the Borough during the past year, record its thanks and deep appreciation of her services as Mayor, and the Council further record its appreciation of the gracious work of the retired Mayor's Consort, Mr Paul Rynsard.



The retiring Mayor acknowledged her year in office.

**256. Election of Deputy Mayor and Consort**

On the motion of Councillor Betty McLatchy, seconded by Councillor Tony Brown, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Margaret Marks be and is hereby elected Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year.

The Deputy Mayor signed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and acknowledged her election.

**257. Presentations**

The Mayor announced presentations to Mrs Vivienne Clements, the Mayoress; Mr Paul Rynsard, the retiring Mayor's Consort; and Mrs Elaine McManus, the Deputy Mayor's Consort.

*(At 1.12pm, the Mayor then announced the conclusion of the ceremonial business of the Council and an adjournment for a civic reception. The procedural business in Part II of the Agenda commenced at 2.00 pm.)*

*(Councillor Bob Cockle left the meeting during the adjournment and did not return. Councillors David Nettleton and Peter Thompson arrived during the adjournment for the start of Part II (Procedural Business) of the meeting.)*

**258. Appointment of Cabinet Members**

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, announced that he would not be making any changes to the membership of the Cabinet nor the portfolios at the present time, and therefore the Cabinet would comprise the following:

<b><u>Councillor</u></b>	<b><u>Portfolio</u></b>
Robert Everitt	Families and Communities
Sara Mildmay-White	Housing
John Griffiths	Leader
Ian Houlder	Resources and Performance
Alaric Pugh	Planning and Growth
Joanna Rayner	Leisure and Culture
Peter Stevens	Operations

Councillor Griffiths also informed that Councillor Sara Mildmay-White would continue in her role as Deputy Leader of the Council.

**259. Review of Political Balance and Appointment to Politically Balanced Bodies**

Council considered Report No: AGM/SE/17/001, which detailed the outcome of the Political Balance Review as at 18 May 2017 and provided an analysis of the number of seats on the various committees required to be allocated to

the Council's political groups, based on the rules of proportionality where applicable.

Tabled before Members was an amended version of the report, which had been required to address the vacancy on the Council, which had arisen following the very recent death of Councillor Angela Rushen.

The table at Appendix 1 (Amended) showed those bodies that were required to be politically balanced and provided the exact entitlement to places of each Group.

Council then considered that the allocation of seats and substitutes to political groups in accordance with the political balance rules, and the re-appointment of the existing membership or appointment of new membership, as applicable, to the various bodies listed in the report, would be made under delegated authority on the nominations of Group Leaders.

Appendix 2 contained the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the various bodies listed in the report, which were required by the Constitution to be reviewed at the Annual Meeting. Following a recent review of the functions and responsibilities of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, amendments had been proposed to the ToR for this Committee, and these were duly accepted by the Council.

On the motion of Councillor John Griffiths, seconded by Councillor David Nettleton, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Committees, Joint Committees and Working Party listed in Sections 1.2.1 to 1.2.3 of Report No: AGM/SE/17/001 (AMENDED) continue to operate for 2017/2018 in accordance with their existing number of seats and terms of reference (ToR), as amended to include revisions to the ToR for the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, as contained in Appendix 2;
- (2) the formula for the allocation of seats to the political groups on those Committees which are required by law to be politically balanced, as set out in paragraph 1.1.1, be approved;
- (3) the allocation of seats on the Committees which are required by law to be politically balanced, as indicated in Appendix 1 to Report No: AGM/SE/17/001 (AMENDED), be approved;
- (4) the allocation of seats on the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee, as indicated in Section 1.2.2, be approved. This Committee is not required to be politically balanced;
- (5) whilst the Democratic Renewal Working Party is not required to be politically balanced, the allocation of seats is by custom and practice, undertaken on this basis. Therefore, the allocation of seats to this Working Party, as indicated in Section 1.2.3, be approved; and

- (6) the Service Manager (Democratic Services) be requested to exercise their existing delegated authority to re-appoint or appoint as applicable, Members and substitute Members to those bodies set out in recommendations (3), (4) and (5) above on the basis of nominations from the relevant Group Leaders.

**260. Appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Committees**

(a) Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

On the motion of Councillor John Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Tony Brown, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Diane Hind be appointed as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(b) Vice-Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

On the motion of Councillor John Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Diane Hind, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Susan Glossop be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recognition was given to Councillor Jeremy Farthing, as the former Vice-Chairman of this Committee, for his work in this role in previous years.

(c) Chairman of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

On the motion of Councillor John Griffiths, seconded by Councillor John Burns, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Sarah Broughton be appointed as Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

(d) Vice-Chairman of Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee

On the motion of Councillor John Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Sarah Broughton, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Patsy Warby be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Performance and Audit Scrutiny Committee.

## 261. **Review and Appointment of Representation on Outside Bodies**

Council considered Report No: AGM/SE/17/002, which sought approval for the appointment and re-appointment (where applicable) of Member representation on outside bodies.

At each Annual Meeting, the Council was required to receive, or arrange the delegation of, nominations of Councillors to serve on any outside body for which a new appointment or re-appointment was required.

Attached as Appendix A to the report was the list of outside bodies for the last civic year, 2016/2017. This list provided the name of the organisations and the number of representatives in that year.

Councillor John Griffiths, Leader of the Council, drew attention to representation on the board of Suffolk County Council's 'Our Greenest County', as contained in Appendix A. He subsequently nominated Councillor Susan Glossop to replace Councillor Peter Stevens, the current representative, on this board.

The Council considered the remaining existing and newly nominated representatives on outside bodies listed at Appendix A and agreed that the existing delegated authority of the Service Manager (Democratic Services) and Monitoring Officer should be exercised to appoint or re-appoint, as applicable, the Borough Council's representatives on outside bodies not covered by the provisions made in Recommendations (1), (2) and (3) for 2017/2018.

On the motion of Councillor John Griffiths, seconded by Councillor Peter Stevens, and duly carried, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Where the Council may send observers to meetings of outside bodies these will be appointed by the Cabinet.
- (2) If deemed appropriate, the Council to explore the passing of nominations to other organisations.
- (3) Where the Council may make a nomination, but the nominee is not automatically appointed by the organisation, the nomination be made by the Cabinet.
- (4) The Service Manager (Democratic Services) and Monitoring Officer be requested to exercise their existing delegated authority to:
  - (a) re-appoint the existing Borough Council's representatives on outside bodies not covered by the provisions made in Recommendations (1), (2) and (3) above for 2017/2018, as detailed in Appendix A to Report No: AGM/SE/17/002; and

- (b) make new appointments to outside bodies, as applicable, in accordance with nominations put forward by the relevant Group Leaders or (if applicable) the nominating body or individual listed.

The meeting concluded at 2.15 pm

**Signed by:**

**Mayor**

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# Council



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Leader's Statement</b>	
<b>Paper No:</b>	<b>COU/SE/17/008</b>	
<b>Paper to and date:</b>	<b>Council</b>	13 June 2017
<b>Documents attached:</b>	<b>None</b>	

1. Firstly, I wanted to say what an excellent Mayor making and annual meeting we had. I believe it was also a social media sensation, with more than a thousand views of live streaming and films on Twitter and Facebook. Thank you again to our outgoing Mayor Julia Wakelam who has been a great champion for the Council and area, and welcome to Terry Clements and Margaret Marks who I know will do an equally excellent job.
2. In addition, I'd like to extend our congratulations to James Palmer who was elected as the first and new Mayor for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. We, of course, know James well as Leader of East Cambridgeshire District Council and know he understands the shared issues and opportunities that cross our borders. I look forward to developing this relationship and working with him in the future.
3. A special Joint Cabinet meeting was held in Mildenhall to discuss looking at the benefits of creating a new Single Council for West Suffolk. Perhaps, as a good omen for future discussions today, it was a unanimous decision by both Cabinets. All believe there are real benefits for the communities we serve, that currently we can't deliver in the best possible way. It also means we can not only meet future challenges better, but create jobs and opportunities, while continuing to deliver high quality services. Equally, we know there are issues that need to be looked at which is why both Cabinets agreed there needs to be a Member Steering Group to consider these. Today's full Council will look at the business case and the setting up of the Steering Group. This will also include engaging with the public on proposals going forward.
4. Last week was National Volunteers' Week, and I would like to publicly praise not only the hundreds of volunteers we work with, but the army of community heroes that make our area so special and make a real difference. Indeed, we can already see the benefits of the new ways we are working

with our residents and local groups as part of our families and communities work. We have worked with residents across West Suffolk to invest £155,877 in 349 community led projects. I know many of you in this room have been at the forefront working with your communities on these projects, which are making a real difference.

5. I know you shared my sadness to hear the news of the passing of fellow councillor and great friend Angela Rushen. Angela was a very much liked, valued and respected colleague who served St Edmundsbury and the Chedburgh Ward so very well since her election in 2011. Our thoughts are with her family and friends.
6. Equally, it was sad to hear of the passing of Forest Heath District Councillor and colleague Bill Sadler, and Waveney District Council Leader Colin Law. Both were dedicated to the communities they served and will be sadly missed.
7. I want to briefly mention the tragic events in Manchester and London. We were all moved by the dreadful stories and pictures we saw following those cowardly act of terrorism. But what was heartening were the tales of courage and compassion, and how emergency and public services (as well as the community as a whole) came together.
8. Communities beat terrorism, by being vigilant and by working together. We have strong, diverse and vibrant communities here in St Edmundsbury and West Suffolk, who I know pride themselves in being good neighbours and looking out for each other. I am sure you will join me in thanking our local emergency and public services, not only for the job they do every day, but also making sure we can all go about our normal lives at this time of heightened security.

**Councillor John Griffiths**  
**Leader of the Council**



# Council



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>A Single Council for west Suffolk – draft business case</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>COU/SE/17/009</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Council</b>	13 June 2017
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	John Griffiths Leader of the Council <b>Tel:</b> 07958700434 <b>Email:</b> john.griffiths@stedsbc.gov.uk	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Ian Gallin Chief Executive <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757001 <b>Email:</b> ian.gallin@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	On 30 May 2017, both Cabinets commissioned officers to test the option of a single council for west Suffolk against the potential alternatives. This report provides that analysis and seeks the consent of both Councils to undertake a public engagement exercise on the option of a single district-level council.	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that Council:</b></p> <p><b>(1) Agrees in principle that the draft business case attached at Appendix A to Report No: COU/SE/17/009 demonstrates that a single district-level council for west Suffolk represents the most effective governance arrangements moving forwards;</b></p> <p><b>(2) Agrees to test the draft business case through an engagement exercise with the public and other key stakeholders in accordance with the approach set out in paragraph 1.2 of Report No: COU/SE/17/009;</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Continued over...</i></p>	

	<p><b>(3) Notes that the detailed considerations required in forming a single council will continue to be assessed by the Future Governance Member Steering Group set up for this purpose; and</b></p> <p><b>(4) Notes that a further report will be brought to both Councils in September 2017, containing the final business case and incorporating the outcomes of the engagement exercise.</b></p>
<p><b>Key Decision:</b></p> <p><i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i></p>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>Consultation:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The intention to consider future governance arrangements for local government in West Suffolk was widely communicated on 9 May 2017. Members were briefed individually or through group leaders in advance. The communication also included notification to key stakeholders, and the views expressed in response have been taken into account in the drafting of this report and the business case.</li> <li>The report sets out the proposed engagement plan which will take place should both Councils agree to the proposals.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alternative option(s):</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The alternative options are explored within the draft business case</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implications:</b></p>	
<p>Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The cost of the public engagement exercise is approximately £20,000 to be jointly funded across the West Suffolk Councils and will be funded from within existing budgets.</li> </ul>
<p>Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<p>Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li></li> </ul>
<p>Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i></p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The draft business case needs to take account of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government's tests for changes in</li> </ul>

	governance arrangements and the requirements of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England		
<i>Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> • An equality screening opinion has been undertaken, and attached at Appendix B to this report, which has indicated that there are no negative impacts		
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>			
<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>			
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
The opportunity to examine the most effective model of local government for west Suffolk is missed.	Medium	The business case attached at this report demonstrates that a single council is the best option when compared to the alternatives and should be examined by members.	Low
Stakeholders do not understand the proposals and the coverage and conversations cause confusion.	Medium	A robust engagement plan has been prepared to enable effective communication of the key benefits of the proposal.	Low
The opportunity to avoid additional costs to the shared service partnership through diverging financial strategies is missed.	Medium	The business case attached to this report demonstrates that a single council would create the opportunity to protect shared service savings achieved to date, avoid additional costs through diverging financial strategies, and generate additional cashable savings.	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All Wards	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		Scoping paper presented to Joint Informal Cabinet meetings on 30 May 2017: <a href="https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/s20546/CAB.FH.17.026%20The%20Future%20of%20Local%20Government%20in%20West%20Suffolk.pdf">https://democracy.westsuffolk.gov.uk/documents/s20546/CAB.FH.17.026%20The%20Future%20of%20Local%20Government%20in%20West%20Suffolk.pdf</a>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		<b>Appendix A:</b> Draft Business Case for a Single Council for west Suffolk <b>Appendix B:</b> Equalities Impact Assessment	

## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations**

### **1.1 The case for a single council for west Suffolk**

1.1.1 On 30 May 2017, the Leaders of both Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils jointly presented a scoping report to an extraordinary meeting of both Cabinets, proposing that work be commissioned from officers to test their lead option of a single district-level council for west Suffolk against the other options available. This followed an announcement by both Leaders on 9 May of their intention to begin a process to explore the best option for council organisation in west Suffolk, focusing on a single district council.

1.1.2 The Cabinet report recognised that both councils are working in a more challenging and complex environment than before. There is now the opportunity to reflect the way that the councils work together, to make sure they remain financially and structurally resilient in the long term, and can continue with a strong base from which to invest in and support communities and businesses, and deliver services to customers in the next decade.

1.1.3 The Cabinet meeting recognised that any move towards a single council must be subject to a business case, to test the options available that are within our control. This required the testing of whether a single council would be better than continuing with the status quo of two separate councils.

1.1.4 This draft business case is now attached for Council consideration and approval at Appendix A, and concludes that a single council does represent the most efficient and effective form of district governance for the future in that, compared to the other options available, it would (see p6-8 of Appendix A):

- deliver greater value for money for residents, generate savings and enable increased self sufficiency;
- be simpler for residents, officers and partner organisations;
- maintain democratic accountability;
- enable the Councils to increase their scale and influence as a district council; and
- improve resilience compared to the current position.

A new single council would also be better able to play its part in delivering the strategic goals and benefits shared by all public services in Suffolk.

1.1.5 The draft business case has been subject to an equalities screening impact, attached at Appendix B, which has concluded that there are no negative impacts from the proposals and therefore no specific action required to be compliant.

### **1.2 Engagement plan**

1.2.1 Should the draft business case be agreed by both Councils, a formal period of public and stakeholder engagement will be undertaken to ascertain if there is support amongst the communities, businesses and partner organisations in west Suffolk for the proposals as required by DCLG, before the Final Business Case is presented to Councils in September 2017.

- 1.2.2 Key stakeholders have already been informed of the proposals, via formal communications on the day that the Leaders' intentions were announced (9 May 2017). The announcement was accompanied by a media briefing, which significantly increased the profile of the issue in the local and regional media and drew it to attention of many residents.
- 1.2.3 A full engagement programme over forthcoming weeks has been developed, which includes:
- Dialogue between Members and residents, businesses and community organisations in their Wards. Members are encouraged to raise the profile of the proposals and how to feed back views;
  - An online survey;
  - Identification of existing programmed community events where the single council proposals can be discussed and public attention drawn to the survey;
  - Formal communication to stakeholders, identifying the Councils' intention to proceed and why this is the case, offering opportunities to discuss the proposals and raising awareness of the online survey;
  - A 'phone poll, to be commissioned from a specialist nationwide polling company. The company will independently survey a representative sample of randomly selected electors across both Councils' areas to capture their views towards the proposal. The methodology used will give a statistically robust set of results, in line with industry standards; and
  - A separate section on the Councils' website, explaining why the Councils wish to proceed with the proposals. The website will also include "frequently asked questions" that have been raised through the process which should serve to allay any concerns or misunderstandings about the proposals.

### 1.3 **Progressing the proposals**

- 1.3.1 As set out above, subject to the agreement of both Councils, the draft business case will now be subject to engagement before it is presented back to Councils in September. If agreed, the final Business Case will then be presented to the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government to assess and ultimately approve via the issue of a Draft Order, creating a new district council for west Suffolk.
- 1.3.2 Once the Order has been created, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) will undertake a review to establish the new ward structure, and a transition authority may come into immediate effect to oversee the implementation plan to create the new council.
- 1.3.3 As is highlighted within the draft business case, if the single council proposal does not receive Council approval, the LGBCE will be undertaking a full electoral review of the number of councillors and ward boundaries anyway and, as such, a review due to single council would not create any additional process for any party.
- 1.3.4 The timetable set out in pages 20-21 of the draft business case is ambitious, and in practice there are many technical aspects involved in creating a new council that Members will have to consider – the name of the council, its status

and governance arrangements, the number of councillors required, and how the transition will operate.

- 1.3.5 We are aware that, for many Members, the technical issues may be of significant importance as to whether they can support the final proposals. There are actually very few aspects of how a new council would work in future that are dictated by the Secretary of State's Order, but resolving these key issues at the earliest stage gives us the greatest opportunity to influence the decisions of the Secretary of State, and give clarity to our communities on exactly how a new council for west Suffolk would operate.
- 1.3.6 With this in mind, the Cabinets have formed a Future Governance Steering Group, to help inform debate on the technical issues required in order that proposals can be taken to Councils in the Autumn 2017 should the Final Business Case be agreed.

**A SINGLE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR WEST SUFFOLK – DRAFT BUSINESS CASE**

**Proposal from the Leaders of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council for the creation of a new, single council for west Suffolk**

**A. Executive summary**

1. Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council have prepared a draft business case to test the option of a new, single district or borough council for west Suffolk from May 2019.
2. The proposal has arisen out of a commitment to shape the arrangements for local government in west Suffolk in the best possible way, in order to support our residents and business communities in achieving their ambitions and facing the changing and challenging future in the next decade.
3. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have a long, shared history, culminating in recent years in the formation of a full shared service partnership between the two councils that has saved in excess of £4 million in staff and other costs every year since 2011.
4. Appendix A to the draft business case tests the following four options for further transformation in west Suffolk, against the Government's criteria for considering changes in local council structures:

***Options***

1. do nothing
2. revert to working as two separate councils (dismantle the shared service partnership)
3. expand the shared service partnership to include other councils
4. create a new, single district council for west Suffolk

***Government criteria***

- better local/public services;
- significant cost savings;
- greater value for money;
- stronger and more accountable local leadership; and
- sustainability in the medium to long term.

5. The options appraisal concludes that a new, single district council for west Suffolk would bring the greatest benefits for local businesses and communities, including:

- value for money, financial savings and self-sufficiency;
- simplicity;
- democratic accountability;
- influence; and
- resilience.

6. Central to the proposal to create a new, single council is the desire to ensure that we can continue to meet the challenges that we are facing and take advantage of opportunities. For example, we are ambitious to go further in our place-shaping role, growing our local economy further, and putting families and communities at the heart of everything we do.
7. We also want to move forward with new forms of local government, for example, putting decisions and services at the most local level possible, investing in prevention, not crisis interventions, maximising our assets, and integrating with the rest of the public sector system.
8. All of this will require strong leadership from elected ward members. Both councils will already be subject to Electoral Reviews by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) before the 2019 elections. So, whatever happens, the make-up of the two councils will be changing in the coming years to reflect growth in the districts over the last 15 years and changes in how local government works.
9. In spite of these strategic changes, there will be no change to the things that are currently valued about Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils, in terms of locally delivered services, good customer access and strong connections between local councillors and their communities.
10. As the financial section of the business case makes clear, the main financial driver of the proposal to become a single council would be to protect the over £4m per year savings already achieved and to maximise the organisation's efficiency to address future challenges. There would be some immediate cashable savings of around £0.5m per year. The proposal would also ensure resilience and sustainability of much-valued local council services across the whole of west Suffolk, enabling us to continue to support businesses and residents.
11. A new single council would have a single level of council tax after a period of harmonisation. Appendix B sets out how this might be achieved, building on the existing commitments and requirements for changes in council tax over the medium term.
12. If agreement to the proposal for a single council is reached at the Council meetings on 13 and 14 June 2017, a period of public engagement will follow. A further proposal will be brought to both councils at their meetings in September 2017 for final approval. If both councils agree to proceed with creating a single council at this stage, the process of implementation will begin.

## **B. Introduction**

13. Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council are committed to shaping the arrangements for local government in west Suffolk in the best possible way, in order to support our residents and business communities in achieving their ambitions and facing the changing and challenging future in the next decade. Our belief is that the



best option for us to achieve this is through the creation of a new, single district or borough council for west Suffolk from May 2019.

14. Our proposal to create a single council is shaped by our commitment to:

- a strong and growing economy;
- strong families and communities;
- self-sufficient and resilient local government;
- Using our commercial approach to invest back into our communities; and
- Efficient, effective services, offering value for money.

15. This document gives further detail on what creating a single district council for west Suffolk would entail, and compares it to the other organisational options to the councils.

### ***About West Suffolk***

16. The concept of West Suffolk has a long history, and the two councils of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have a lot in common, most recently reflected in the strong will amongst both authorities to work together more closely. This has led, over the past 8 years, to the formation of joint strategic plans and objectives, and a fully shared officer structure. At a member level, the joint families and communities strategy has emphasised a growing leadership role to create strong, empowered communities.

17. West Suffolk lies at a crossroads between the larger urban centres of Cambridge, Ipswich and Norwich with whom it is well connected by the A14 and A11. But the area also has its own unique environmental, economic, social and cultural strengths. West Suffolk is a beautiful rural area, with 85 parishes, nationally significant forest and heathlands and a number of thriving market towns. In particular, west Suffolk includes the historic town of Bury St Edmunds; the world centre for the horseracing industry at Newmarket; enterprise zones at Haverhill and Bury St Edmunds, Center Parcs near Brandon, the US Air Force bases at Mildenhall and Lakenheath and the RAF base at Honington.

18. The two districts are marked by their similarities, not their differences. As the map and infographics show, similar proportions of residents live in urban and rural areas; there are similar levels of deprivation in the two districts and residents and businesses in the two districts face similar challenges and opportunities for the future, for example, benefitting from the growth of Cambridge on the one hand, and supporting an increasingly ageing population on the other hand.

19. An assessment of our governance structure will enable us to review how we can work more effectively to support these common challenges, without losing our strong community relationships.

### **About the councils**

Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils are adjacent district councils in the west of Suffolk, a county with two-tier governance (Suffolk County Council plus 7 district councils). The councils are members of both New Anglia and Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEPS. They are not part of any current or proposed future combined authorities.

	<b>Population (2015)</b>	<b>Number of Councillors</b>	<b>Revenue budget (2017-2018)*</b>
Forest Heath	63,691	27	£31.5m
St Edmundsbury	112,523	45	£62.1m

*\*Gross budget including Housing Benefit payments*

### **Local government transformation in west Suffolk - savings and achievements so far**

20. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils are proud of our track record of sharing services and formulating joint plans and initiatives. We have saved in excess of £4 million in staff and other costs every year since 2011 through our full shared service and management partnership arrangements, and continue year-on-year to do this. This enables us to continue delivering excellent services and to support our communities to shape their futures. Since 2014, we have operated under shared Strategic Plans, Medium Term Financial Strategies and other major policies and strategies, underlining our shared commitment to working in partnership to make a difference in west Suffolk.

21. All of these savings were achieved without external funding or structural changes in governance. They form the first phase of our transformation journey in west Suffolk – the next step in which is our proposal to become a single council.

22. Our proposal follows consideration of the model of district-level local government our communities need in the future, in order to ensure their local provider of services is sufficiently stable, strong and influential in the face of radical change in the public sector and society more widely. These challenges include supporting an ageing population while driving growth in the local economy and in the context of reduced funding.

23. As set out in the remainder of this paper, our belief as Leaders, supported by our members, is that creating a new, single West Suffolk Council will give us the best possible opportunity to secure our future as viable councils as well as the future of the services delivered to our residents, businesses and communities.

***The options for further transformation in west Suffolk***

24. In formulating the proposal for a single council, consideration has been given to the following four options<sup>1</sup>.

- do nothing
- revert to working as two separate councils (dismantle the shared service partnership)
- expand the shared service partnership to include other councils
- create a new, single district council for west Suffolk

25. Based on the high level options appraisal at Appendix A, we have developed the option of creating a new district council for west Suffolk (the 'single council'), as set out in the remainder of this document.

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<sup>1</sup> Options 1-3 above already entail some element of change from the status quo, as both councils will be undergoing Electoral Review in 2017.

### **C: Benefits of a single council**

26. A single council for West Suffolk would give us the following advantages:

#### ***Value for money, financial savings and self-sufficiency***

- i) As set out in more detail in the financial business case below, becoming a single council is estimated to generate a further £0.5 million of annual cashable savings as well as protecting the annual shared services savings of £4 million plus across West Suffolk.
- ii) Becoming a single council would also mean releasing some capacity that is currently absorbed by serving two bodies. This would enable us to focus more on growing a single council's business areas (to generate new income to support services) and investing in communities. It would also mean doing the best for residents in terms of maximising the resources directed towards achieving outcomes, rather than spending time on complex or duplicated processes.
- iii) New income opportunities and savings will continue to be realised when contracts and system requirements come up for review, and dual arrangements can be replaced with a simpler, cheaper, single contractual relationship.
- iv) In the longer term, a single council would mean a bigger asset base to borrow against, without individual ring-fenced budgets.
- v) Achievement of i) – iv) above would provide a stronger basis from which to build a more financially self-sufficient organisation.

#### ***Simplicity***

- vi) Becoming a single council could be seen as a natural continuation of the shared service journey. By removing the remaining complexities inherent in serving two bodies, the organisation would be simpler to run and manage, especially when considering new delivery models. Financial systems would be simpler, with single reporting requirements, and a removal of ring-fences and the need for reconciliation between different council budgets when running a shared operational service.
- vii) While we would still want a physical presence across the whole of West Suffolk with places for communities and businesses to access our services in different localities, including the Mildenhall Hub, the requirements for our buildings would be even simpler and more flexible than now.
- viii) We would also expect to see some of our staff capacity released as a result of more simple and effective ways of working, allowing us to focus on the delivery of key projects and strategic priorities.
- ix) Becoming a single council would also have benefits for our partnership working. Having seen the benefits that collaboration and clear leadership can bring to communities, some of our key service delivery partners have also joined together, so a single council for west Suffolk would mean a simplification of the decision making and service delivery relationships operating

within partnership relationships in local government and associated sectors.

- x) Delivery of services within local government and associated sectors has become increasingly fluid, with partners transferring responsibilities or working together more closely to deliver services. With increased fluidity, a single democratic decision making structure would support other systems established to support fast and efficient service delivery, meaning this proposal should be to the benefit of our key delivery partners.

### ***Democratic accountability***

- xi) A single council would mean the retention of a democratically sound model, but with an end to the need for joint decisions by the councils. Continuing with joint, but separate, decision-making could over time create a perceived 'democratic deficit', as joint decisions may be seen as blurring accountability, especially as financial pressures will differ over time. Residents would also benefit from a renewed democratic relationship with a new body. This would complement the opportunity of forging new relationships with communities.

### ***Influence***

- xii) A larger council, with a bigger population, local economy and GVA (Gross Value Added) would allow us more influence on the regional or national stage. A west Suffolk Council would have a population of over 176,000 (using 2015 estimates), rising to 202,129 in 2039<sup>2</sup>. This would bring the councils from being 86th and 189th largest district councils in England (out of 202) to around 8th largest district/borough council when combined – a big voice among our peers and central Government.
- xiii) In particular, a larger council would be a more significant organisation in the context of a devolved model of working, alongside a combined authority and other partners with whom we want to pursue integrated working. This would be especially important when it comes to services such as health and social care where, as a council small enough to have strong local working relationships and knowledge, but large enough to deliver complex services competently, we could have a real impact on the lives of our residents and families.
- xiv) By creating a single council, we would be keeping pace with other areas where similar activities are taking place, such as East Suffolk, thereby allowing us to take advantage of being in the vanguard of transformation and reform.

### ***Resilience***

- xv) A single council will be a more resilient organisation than two smaller councils in the future and therefore better able to face the significant changes and challenges that local government will experience in the remainder of this decade and into the next.

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<sup>2</sup> This compares to East Suffolk, whose combined population in 2014 was 240,695 and is expected to rise to 259,450 in 2039.

The current governance arrangements, which date back to 1974, while they have been fit for purpose so far, are likely to come under challenge in the longer term, particularly from the point of view of the potential for each individual council's financial strategies to diverge in the future, in light of some of the different financial pressures and opportunities facing each one. These pressures relate especially to those arising from changes to local government funding, such as the cut in government grants, 2017 business rates valuations, as well as significant changes expected around New Homes Bonus and 100% Business Rates Retention from 2019-20. All of these changes will put pressure on shared service delivery and therefore the cost-sharing model that supports them. This is explored further in the financial section later in this document. The small size of the councils, also raises questions about vulnerability in the medium term.

## **D: The role and vision of a West Suffolk council**

### ***The journey so far: shared ambitions***

27. At the heart of the proposal to create a new, single council is a desire to continue to deliver against our strategic priorities and to make a difference for our residents, communities and businesses. These priorities are currently:

**Priority 1:** Increased opportunities for economic growth

**Priority 2:** Resilient families and communities that are healthy and active

**Priority 3:** Homes for our communities

28. As Leaders we also want to continue to embed the new ways of working that the councils have adopted in order to achieve these priorities, and the move towards self-sufficiency, which are described in the six themes of the councils' shared Medium Term Financial Strategy, as follows:

1. aligning resources to both councils' new strategic plan and essential services;
2. continuation of the shared service agenda and transformation of service delivery;
3. behaving more commercially;
4. considering new funding models (e.g. acting as an investor);
5. encouraging the use of digital forms for customer access; and
6. taking advantage of new forms of local government finance (e.g. business rate retention).

### ***Looking ahead***

29. As we look towards the next decade, we want to build on the councils' successes so far, by driving forward progress. West Suffolk is a thriving and dynamic part of the world, with vibrant market towns, strong

village communities and beautiful countryside. It has a broad-based economy, with a diverse range of small and medium sized enterprises, as well as some major employers. Tourism is a major asset, and new businesses are attracted to the area due to our relatively affordable housing, safe local areas, and good strategic transport links. However, we remain aware that some people in our communities can be left behind and don't enjoy these benefits. We therefore want to bring about inclusive growth and support our communities in making sure everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and overcome challenges to their social, financial and physical wellbeing.

### ***Our vision for a new council***

30. If a new single council, fundamentally different from our existing councils (which have diligently served their communities for the past 40 years), becomes a reality then we would expect it to build its own vision through engagement with its councillors and, through them, its communities and local businesses.

31. However, a new West Suffolk council would present an opportunity to put in place many of the new ways of working and constitutional and corporate changes that Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have been moving towards in recent years, and that do the best possible job in terms of supporting residents. From the outset, the new organisation could develop these ways of working further, for example:

- place-shaping on a wider scale than we do now, championing our localities and shaping them for the future;
- having the capacity to grow our own economy further, and reinvesting the benefits into supporting our local area;
- putting families and communities at the heart of everything that we do by engaging them in service delivery and reducing the need for some services;
- making sure things are done at the right level (subsidiarity), including a greater role for town and parish councils in truly local matters;
- using our community links to support our customers to access services in the best way;
- investing in prevention, not crisis interventions;
- integrating with the rest of the public sector system
- maximising our assets;
- behaving more commercially; and
- ensuring financial stability.

## **E: A new model of local government**

### ***The story so far - shared services***

32. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils have already started on a shared journey of strategic change, designed to support the achievement of our shared strategic vision to 'support communities to create the best possible future for people in west Suffolk'. The proposal

for a single council is therefore set in this context, and is the logical next step.

33. Since 2012, the councils have shared a Chief Executive, and since 2013, all staff have worked for both councils, on a single set of terms and conditions. In making these changes, which save more than £4 million of taxpayers' money each year, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have placed themselves at the forefront of public service reform, within the context of similarly strong transformation across the whole of the Suffolk public sector.

34. Councillors in Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury already work on a joint basis, for example through joint committees and working parties, joint Cabinet meetings, joint portfolio holder briefings and shared induction and learning and development programmes. Our councillor body consists of 72 members (27 in Forest Heath and 45 in St Edmundsbury). Both councils are currently Conservative-led, and each has its own Leader and Cabinet arrangement. Both councils currently set separate council taxes and budgets, even where used to fund jointly delivered services.

35. Sharing services has allowed the councils to remain strong in the face of recent challenges, and to support communities and deliver services in spite of ongoing cuts in funding. However, there is now a sense that the limits have now been reached of what the shared services model and traditional transformation and efficiency saving approaches can achieve in terms of making savings and creating a resilient organisation to face future challenges. Like several other councils locally and nationally, West Suffolk is ready to take the next step.

36. Councils are political organisations and, as such, the current partnership carries a significant financial risk to its sustainability in the event of political change (either through elections or of leadership), or through conflict arising between the two councils. This risk would be mitigated by the creation of a new, single council.

### ***Council size***

37. Critical to the success of a single council would be the leadership role of ward members, who would be at the frontline of our engagement with communities and integral to our ways of working, championing their localities, and providing local leadership, including liaising with town or parish councils.

38. Both councils will already be subject to Electoral Reviews by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) before the 2019 elections. The last reviews were in 2001 and implemented in 2003 and growth in the area has unbalanced the existing wards. So, whatever happens, the make-up of the two councils will be changing in the coming years to reflect growth in the districts over the last 15 years and changes in how local government works.



39. If FHDC and SEBC were to proceed with the creation of a single council, councillors from both authorities would still need to submit a proposal to the Secretary of State for the size and governance arrangements for the new council. As with the existing planned reviews, this would need to include the number of councillors needed for effective representation of the community and strategic decision-making, but in relation to a single council rather than two separate ones. The proposal would then inform the work of the LGBCE who would carry out an Electoral Review of the new council following the agreement of the Secretary of State to the proposal.

40. The proposals for the size of the new council would need to reflect the guidance from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on how many councillors are needed in 21st century councils. Applying the guidance to the whole of west Suffolk at the same time would allow a coherent view to be taken on the issue of ward size ensuring, among other things, electoral equality for shared decision-taking.

### ***DCLG principles***

41. In summary, a single council for west Suffolk would support the Department for Communities and Local Government's five broad, non-statutory principles that have been adopted for considering proposals for changes in local governance in advance of their being submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. These are as follows:

- better local/public services;
- significant cost savings;
- greater value for money;
- stronger and more accountable local leadership; and
- sustainability in the medium to long term.

42. We believe that, as set out above, the proposed creation of a single West Suffolk Council would support these principles.

## **F. Financial business case**

### ***Background***

43. As discussed above, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councils have been on a journey of transformation and public service reform for many years saving in excess of £4 million in staff and other costs every year since 2011. The creation of a new, single council is a model of local government which would meet our communities' needs in the future and which would ensure a local provider of services which is sufficiently stable, strong and influential in the face of radical change in the public sector and society more widely.

44. In February 2017, both Councils approved 4 year balanced budgets covering the MTF period 2017-2021. Post April 2021 the anticipated combined savings targets (see paragraph 49 for business rates income assumptions) for the west Suffolk Councils are as follows:

	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Savings Target (Cumulative)	921	1,404	1,887	2,370	2,853

45. Although this financial business case identifies those costs and savings directly attributable to the creation of a new, single council, it also focuses on the strengths and opportunities that would accompany the creation of a financially stronger council with a higher worth than the current separate authorities.

46. Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury have both some similarities and a differences in their financial profiles. In terms of their balance sheets they have similar profiles reflective of their sizes; however their revenue budget positions have some differences.

47. The table below presents a summary of a new, single council balance sheet for West Suffolk based on the 2015/16 audited Statement of Accounts. Whilst there would not necessarily be immediate or directly quantifiable advantages, the combined balance sheet would undoubtedly be stronger and qualitatively more favourable. West Suffolk would essentially be financially stronger, with a higher net worth base to borrow against and to continue to invest in its communities, without individual ring-fenced budgets.

	<b>Forest Heath</b>	<b>St Edmundsbury</b>	<b>West Suffolk</b>
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Long-Term Assets	£65,783	£109,602	£175,385
Current Assets	£31,736	£51,118	£82,854
Current Liabilities	(£5,013)	(£10,539)	(£15,552)
Long-Term Liabilities	(£21,163)	(£47,821)	(£68,984)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>£71,343</b>	<b>£102,360</b>	<b>£173,703</b>
Usable Reserves	£26,525	£35,008	£61,533
Unusable Reserves	£44,818	£67,352	£112,170
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>£71,343</b>	<b>£102,360</b>	<b>£173,703</b>

48. In terms of the revenue position of the two councils, probably the most noticeable difference concerns the position of the authorities is in respect of council tax receipts and the relative importance of localised business rates and government grants as an income source.

49. In 2019/20, Forest Heath has estimated net business rates income (including direct 'section 31' grants from Government and renewables

income), and revenue support grant of around £3.2 million (approximately 50% of their net revenue budget). In contrast, St Edmundsbury's net business rates income is estimated to be nearly £4.0 million, approximately 32% of their net revenue budget. Forest Heath consequently has a greater reliance on both business rates income and the residual Revenue Support Grant, which has been subject to major Government spending reductions and policy changes.

50. It is important to note that, around 2020, the business rates system will be completely re-set when the Government moves towards 100% retention of business rates by local government. This reset will also be accompanied by the transfer of additional responsibilities to local government, which could include a requirement to part-fund areas such as housing benefits. At this stage, it is impossible to predict the financial positions of both authorities under the new arrangements from 2020/21 onwards.

51. A single authority would have a different profile to the two current districts. Based on Medium Term Financial Strategy forecasts, the table below illustrates the comparative net budget and reserves and balances position of a new authority as at 2019/20, compared with the existing position.

**2019/20 West Suffolk Net Budget Requirement (as approved February 2017)**

<b>NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>Forest Heath £'000S</b>	<b>St Edmundsbury £'000S</b>	<b>West Suffolk £'000S</b>
Council Tax	£2,730	£7,007	£9,737
Revenue Support Grant & Rural Services Delivery Grant	£214	£121	£335
Business Rates Retention	£2,992	£3,831	£6,823
New Homes Bonus Grant	£417	£1,493	£1,910
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6,353</b>	<b>£12,452</b>	<b>£18,805</b>
Council Tax	43%	56%	52%
Revenue Support Grant	3%	1%	2%
Business Rates Retention	47%	31%	36%
New Homes Bonus Grant	7%	12%	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
General - Revenue	£2,000	£3,035	£5,035
Earmarked - Revenue	£6,204	£17,681	£23,885
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>£8,204</b>	<b>£20,716</b>	<b>£28,920</b>

52. The creation of a new, single council would enable a fundamental review of the earmarked reserves and balances held by the two separate authorities. In a number of areas, both authorities hold earmarked reserves for the same stated purpose, and a single council approach

would entail consideration of revised and potentially lower levels for these. A new single council would be able to make more efficient use of its reserves, both in providing for future revenue commitments, and in enabling consideration of capital financing options, which are referred to in more detail later in this document.

### ***Financial business case methodology***

53. The ongoing savings / costs and one-off transition costs that could potentially be expected as a result of the creation of a new single council are based on an initial review and by taking into account others undertaking similar work in this area, such as East Suffolk.

54. As the West Suffolk councils have been sharing all services since 2011, there are limited opportunities to generate further material savings from simply creating a new, single council. The savings are therefore based on the elimination of the relatively fixed costs of being separate authorities.

55. The ongoing savings have been categorised into the following areas:

- a. democratic savings
- b. corporate savings
- c. opportunity cost savings from removing need to invest in additional resources to support diverging financial strategies of two separate authorities

56. Later sections of this proposal consider two other financial aspects of a potential single council - council tax equalisation and capital finance considerations.

57. Overall, this financial analysis indicates that a creation of a single council could potentially produce further annual cashable savings of £0.5 million on top of the £4 million plus shared service savings being delivered annually to date across West Suffolk.

58. Estimated transition costs are likely to be recoverable within a year and will cover officer time and some external legal and software system costs to support the move to a single council.

### ***Ongoing savings***

#### Democratic savings

59. As noted in paragraphs 37-40 (above), the question of how many councillors should be elected to a new West Suffolk Council has not yet been considered by current Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury councillors. Form needs to follow function, so this number must reflect the democratic model sought for the new council and could be either higher or lower than now. However, for the purposes of indicative financial modelling only, a figure of 60 councillors has been used. This is an approximate midpoint between the current councillor number of 72; and a council based on ward sizes of 2500 electors (reflecting current national trends), which would

result in around 50 councillors. A council of 60 councillors would have a ward size of just over 2000 electors.

60. The level of allowances will also be subject to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) and the decision of the new council. To provide a cautious estimate of potential savings, it has been assumed that the new scheme would pay both the highest current allowance in each Members Allowance Scheme, and would also continue to pay any allowance that it is currently paid by one or other of the authorities. This modelling, the midpoint figure referred to above, 60 councillors would, based upon the 15/16 Schemes, gives an estimate for potential savings of £100,000.

### ***Corporate costs***

61. In this financial analysis, a quantified estimate has been made in respect of a number of corporate areas where a single council would effectively automatically generate cashable savings compared with the current arrangements.

62. In addition to these estimates, however, an extremely important element of a single council that needs to be recognised is the gain in efficiency and capacity that would be released. Particularly at senior management team level, serving two authorities generates a considerable level of diseconomies, especially in attending committee meetings, briefing councillors, report writing, etc. In these areas, a single council would create a high level of efficiency savings that, whilst not immediately cashable, would create increased effectiveness of management and productivity. This would enable greater focus on growing business areas (to generate new income to support services) and investing in communities. To express this in financial terms, a 20% efficiency gain for leadership team, and a 10% efficiency gain for service managers is estimated to be equivalent to around £0.35 million per annum.

63. Examples of corporate areas that would effectively see immediate savings include external audit fees, corporate memberships, insurance policies costs and banking. External audit fees contain a significant element of fixed cost relating to the existence of both authorities as separate entities, and savings could be expected in both corporate audit costs, and the audit of benefit subsidy claims. Corporate memberships, such as Local Government Association (LGA) membership and insurance and banking charges would also be expected to reduce.

### ***Opportunity cost savings***

64. One of the risks of status quo is the councils could begin to diverge in their financial strategies as they face different pressures due to their revenue profiles, population sizes and other factors. This could then begin to unravel the considerable financial and service delivery benefits of shared services and as a result is likely to add cost back into the system through additional staffing capacity to deliver the diverging agendas. An estimated £0.2 million is expected to be saved under a single council model as additional capacity would not be required to support the diverging agendas of two separate authorities.

### ***One-off transition costs***

65. Estimates of one-off transition costs have been made at a corporate level, taking into account as far as possible the projects needed to support the two authorities through their transformational journey to a single council date and beyond as a new authority becomes embedded. Allowances for corporate one-off costs include estimates for change management, TUPE support, software system changes, legal and financial matters, contract novation and branding and signage (which could be phased), estimated to be below £0.5million with payback well within one year.

### ***Other financial considerations***

#### Capital finance considerations

66. There could be some potential to reduce the external borrowing requirements that would normally be projected if a single treasury management function, with access to greater volumes of cash and varying profiles, was available under a new, single council. There could also in the short term be some potential reduction in the Minimum Revenue Provision (annual allowance for the repayment of borrowing) requirement as the single council has access to a single capital receipt budget. Based on an estimated borrowing of around £1 million a year, which results in a MRP of around £40,000 (assuming a rate of 4%), and the use of capital receipts this revenue impact could effectively reduce by around £35,000 a year. The cumulative effect of adopting this approach would obviously be dependent on the availability of capital receipts or other resources.

67. No allowance has been made at this stage in this financial summary for any revenue savings arising from these possible revisions to capital financing policy – a new, single council would need fundamentally to review its capital programme priorities and funding, and financing considerations would form an element of this.

### ***Summary financial analysis***

68. A summary of the financial analysis work that has been quantified at this stage is shown below as a high-level summary. This summary is focused on the narrower consideration of the costs and benefits associated with the creation of a single council which could assist DCLG in consideration of this proposal. Consequently, a number of areas where the new authority would need further to develop its approach to deliver the financial advantages associated with being a stronger, single, authority have not been built into this summary. Using these relatively narrow parameters, this summary indicates payback of estimated transition costs early in year 1 following establishment of a new council, and ongoing savings are estimated to progressively increase during this analysis period when the new authority would be becoming increasingly embedded.

69. In addition to these identified ongoing savings, further potential revenue savings could result from review of both earmarked reserves and capital financing policy, as referred to later in this section. Additional non-cashable savings of £0.35 million a year are also expected through the

management efficiencies and capacity created, as explained under the corporate costs section at paragraph 61.

<b>On-going savings</b>	<b>Cashable savings</b>	<b>Non-cashable savings</b>	<b>Total</b>
Democratic/corporate	£0.30m	£0.35m	£0.65m
Opportunity cost savings	£0.20m	£-	£0.20m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£0.5m</b>	<b>£0.35m</b>	<b>£0.85m</b>

### ***Council Tax Modelling***

70. There would be a need (and opportunity) to establish a new budget for a single council, supported by a single level of council tax. The current (2017/18 rates) council tax levels for Band D are as follows:

- i. Forest Heath DC - £142.38
- ii. St Edmundsbury BC - £182.16

71. It is important to note that council tax income is increasingly becoming one of the more reliable and resilient elements of an authority's income budget. With the increased uncertainty of business rates income and government grants (councils continue to experience significant reductions) it is increasingly likely that councils will need to consider a stable level of council tax income in any future budget projections. This approach supports the desire to become more self-sufficient in order to protect services for our various communities. For Forest Heath Council councillors, in particular, increased council tax receipts are likely to continue to be an essential element of their financial strategy in the next administration even if a single council is not created.

72. DCLG has in the past offered the opportunity to harmonise to a single council tax level over a five-year period but indicated that other options could be considered taking each business case on its own merits. It should be noted that it will be for the new, single council to determine the appropriate level of council tax, however for the purposes of this paper and the overall single council discussion and debate a number of harmonisation options have been worked on.

73. The modelling, attached at appendix B), seeks to ensure the following principle in any single year of a harmonisation period (for example 5 years): that the overall council tax receipts of a single council would not be significantly less than the projections of the combined receipts of the two separate councils over the medium term. (The receipts for a single council take into account the assumed cashable savings of becoming a single council.) The modelling also takes into account the current annual council tax increase referendum limit (2% or £5 whichever is higher).

74. Based on the above, the level of council tax for the new, single council across the options modelled is likely to be around £182 - £188 per average band D property by 2025/26 (7th year of new single council). This charge is commensurate (perhaps slightly on the lower side) when

compared with projected levels for other similar, local councils. This comes with the caveat that, of course, it will be for councillors at individual authorities to set their council tax levels taking into account all financial and political considerations.

## **G: FUTURE CHANGES AND CHALLENGES**

75. In moving forward in these areas, we recognise as Leaders that, in common with many local councils, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Councils are now facing unprecedented levels of change, challenges and opportunities, including:

- localism and devolution;
- changes in funding (for example, reductions in Government grant and New Homes Bonus and the move to 100% Business Rate retention by local government);
- the need to focus on prevention and integration;
- technological change; and
- wider societal change.

76. We believe that we therefore need to maximise the resilience of local government in West Suffolk in order to be able to achieve the ambitions set out above, while responding intelligently to, and overcoming, the challenges facing our communities and the councillors who serve them.

77. Any consideration of the proposal for creating a single council needs to be set against this background of change. When comparing the 'do nothing' option with the single council proposal, for example, we need to bear in mind that the context in which both will operate will be very different from the current position in five to fifteen years' time. Our thinking therefore needs to focus on which model will best allow us to achieve our ambitions, give us the greatest resilience and financial self-sufficiency from 2020 onwards, not at the current time.

### **Examples of future changes and challenges**

#### ***Behaving more commercially***

The way councils are financed is changing and the main Government grant will end by around 2020. This means looking at new investments which generate an annual return and allow the councils to be more self-sufficient and therefore to protect public services.

And the councils have been bold with our investments. For example in August 2016 Forest Heath became the owners of a £14.5 million solar farm. This is largest publicly-owned solar farm in the UK and will generate income rising from £300,000 in the first year to just over £700,000 per year by year ten of the 25-year project.

#### ***Considering new funding models***

The councils have been taking new steps to develop our organisation, estate, councillors and staff. We're now looking at new ways to provide



efficient services which generate efficiency savings and build resilience into our services in the future.

One model being explored is joint ventures. The West Suffolk councils recently set up Verse Facilities Management Limited with Suffolk County Council. Verse has enabled the partners to consolidate facilities management services into one company, saving more than £40,000 a year. But this joint venture isn't only about putting facilities management under one hat, it also enables the partner councils to offer commercial services to other organisations and businesses to generate revenue which will contribute to the cost of running vital public services.

## **H. Public engagement and next steps**

78. This proposal will be considered by St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 13 June 2017 and Forest Heath District Council on 14 June 2017.

79. If agreed, following the consultation and engagement period (see below), a further proposal will be brought to both councils at their meetings in September 2017 for final approval. If both councils agree to proceed with creating a single council at this stage, the process of implementation will begin.

80. The formal process for creating a new council would involve the Secretary of State using his powers under s15 of the Cities and Local Government Act 2016 to make changes to local arrangements, in response to proposals from local councils. To do this, the Secretary of State would look to the local elected councillors to make a proposal for the new council, including the number of councillors it should comprise; and to offer evidence alongside the proposal of local public support for it. This evidence would be drawn from the consultation and engagement period proposed to take place during June – September 2017.

### ***Consultation and engagement***

81. It is a matter for individual councils how exactly they engage with local people to inform them about, and seek their response to, a proposal to merge with a neighbouring council. There are no statutory requirements to consult in a particular way.

82. If FHDC and SEBC agree to the recommendations, a period of public consultation and engagement would begin during June 2017. During the engagement period, there would be:

- an opportunity for all residents to respond to an online/printed questionnaire;
- a telephone poll of a representative sample of 1000 electors, carried out by an independent opinion polling company;
- and
- ongoing dialogue with stakeholders, including businesses, communities, interest groups and residents.

### **Recommended timetable**

St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) meeting.  <b>Recommendation:</b> to agree proposal and launch consultation and engagement period	13 June 2017
Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) meeting  <b>Recommendation:</b> to agree proposal and launch consultation and engagement period	14 June 2017
Future Governance Member Steering Group established to consider council size	June 2017
Consultation and engagement period	June – September 2017
SEBC Council meeting  <b>Recommendation:</b> to agree to submit proposal to Secretary of State	26 September 2017
FHDC Council meeting  <b>Recommendation:</b> to agree to submit proposal to Secretary of State	27 September 2017
FHDC and SEBC Special Cabinet meetings  <b>Recommendation:</b> to agree the executive elements of the proposals	On the rising of both full council meetings
Proposal submitted to Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government	October / November
Secretary of State lays orders for a single council	Autumn 2017 - Spring 2018
Electoral review process by Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) (i.e. internal ward boundaries)	Autumn 2017-2018
New Council established	April 2019
First elections to new council	2 May 2019

#### **I. Appendices**

Appendix A – Options appraisal for alternative future governance models  
 Appendix B – Detailed council tax modelling  
 Appendix C - Appraisal of risks associated with proceeding with the creation of a single West Suffolk Council

#### **J. Background documents**

West Suffolk Strategic Plan 2014-2016  
 West Suffolk Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016-2020  
 West Suffolk Annual Report 2015-2016

## Council Tax Harmonisation options

## APPENDIX B

### Option 1 - Harmonisation over 5 years

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>Council Tax Levels</b>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Forest Heath DC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
St Edmundsbury BC	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-10.08	4.95	4.95
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	0	0	135	275	808	771	736
Transitional costs (est.)	300						
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
<b>Net impact (income)/cost</b>	0	(300)	(365)	(225)	308	271	236

### Option 2 - Harmonisation over 6 years

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>Council Tax Levels</b>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Forest Heath DC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
St Edmundsbury BC	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-5.13	4.95
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	0	0	135	275	420	771	736
Transitional costs (est.)	300						
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
<b>Net impact (income)/cost</b>	0	(300)	(365)	(225)	(80)	271	236

### Option 3 - Harmonisation over 7 years

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>Council Tax Levels</b>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
Forest Heath DC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
St Edmundsbury BC	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	182.16	181.98
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.18
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	0	0	135	275	420	572	736
Transitional costs (est.)	300						
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
<b>Net impact (income)/cost</b>	0	(300)	(365)	(225)	(80)	72	236

### Option 4 - Merged rate from April 2019

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>Council Tax Levels</b>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 5	Year 5
Forest Heath DC	166.94	170.28	173.69	177.16	180.70	184.32	188.00
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	19.61	3.34	3.41	3.47	3.54	3.61	3.69
St Edmundsbury BC	166.94	170.28	173.69	177.16	180.70	184.32	188.00
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	-15.22	3.34	3.41	3.47	3.54	3.61	3.69
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	300	207	244	280	316	351	392
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
<b>Net impact (income)/cost</b>	0	(93)	(256)	(220)	(184)	(149)	(108)

For information - cost of reducing to the lowest level, discounted as not financially viable

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
<b>Council Tax Levels</b>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 5	Year 5
Forest Heath DC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change Forest Heath DC</i>	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
St Edmundsbury BC	152.28	157.23	162.18	167.13	172.08	177.03	181.98
<i>Annual change St Edmundsbury BC</i>	-29.88	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
Council Tax Foregone	1,105	931	889	848	808	964	743
Savings	(300)	(300)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)	(500)
<b>Net impact (income)/cost</b>	805	631	389	348	308	464	243

**Note:** The 'annual change' rows under each option above, reflect the annual change under the harmonised council tax options as a single council. Both council's financial plans, as standalone councils, would have assumed a continued rise in council tax during the same period. Forest Heath DC at £4.95 a year and St Edmundsbury BC at 2% per year.

## Appendix C: Risk management

1. In order to properly consider whether to proceed with the proposed single council creation, we need to be mindful of the risks associated both with proceeding and with not proceeding, to ensure that the benefits described above outweigh the risks.

2. An appraisal of the risks associated with proceeding with a new council is set out below, covering the following risks and potential mitigations.

1. Proposal is not approved by the Secretary of State.
2. Creation of a new council is not implemented effectively.
3. Predicted benefits are not realised.
4. Changing status results in unforeseen changes in funding.
5. Confusion over new governance arrangements.
6. Residents perceive the council is more distant.
7. Lack of support from the public.
8. Resistance to change among staff and councillors.
9. Lack of clarity on overall vision and outcomes.
10. Changes in the external environment.

3. Meanwhile, there are a number of risks associated with NOT proceeding with a single council, which need to be borne in mind including:

1. Financial risks of diverging priorities – leading to cuts in service provision, reduced customer satisfaction and higher acute costs (due to lack of investment in prevention).
2. Risks of diverging political priorities during a time of intense pressure on local government (competing priorities). Possible breakdown of shared services arrangements.
3. Greater pressure on council tax levels.
4. Creating asymmetrical member arrangements across the two councils through the forthcoming electoral review process (in 2017) and missing the opportunity to align ward sizes.
5. Reduced councillor, staff and resident morale due to potential impacts on service delivery.
6. Missing out on 'first mover' advantage.

<b>1. Proposal is not approved by the Secretary of State</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Action/ control</b>
Unable to implement the creation of a single West Suffolk Council.	We will continue to seek advice and guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and other associated bodies such as the Local government Association (LGA) and Local Government Boundary Commission for England (BCE)

	to ensure we meet their expectations and make our vision and outcomes clear.
<b>2. Creation of new council is not implemented effectively</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Action/ control</b>
Negative impact on political relationships and service delivery. Negative impact on profile of the previous councils and new merged Council.	We will create a clear and long term vision with regular performance management and progress reports. We will also establish robust political and officer governance to deliver the creation of a new council and long term vision.
<b>3. Predicted benefits are not realised</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Action/ control</b>
Savings and service benefits are not delivered which creates additional budget pressures for the new council.	We will create a clear framework for managing the financial benefits expected from the change. Detailed project design will ensure successful implementation of the new arrangements and associated benefits.
<b>4. Changing status results in unforeseen changes in funding</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Action/ control</b>
Unforeseen budget and service delivery pressures for the new council.	We will continue to horizon scan and engage with Government departments on new developments and announcements. Throughout the transition to a new council we will assess the impact not only on the separate councils but also the future council.
<b>5. Confusion over new governance arrangements</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Action/ control</b>
Reduced public confidence in the decision-making process and quality of decisions being made by the council. Inability to make key decisions which are essential to the running of West Suffolk services.	We will establish robust political governance in consultation with DCLG, the LGA and the BCE. Cross-party and cross-authority work on the new constitution will start during 2017 to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place ahead of the first election in May 2019.
<b>6. Residents perceive the council is more distant</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Action/ control</b>
Less sustainable and resilient communities resulting in increased public sector demand and costs.	There will no change to customer access arrangements. We have a new approach to

<p>The council could experience a reduced ability to understand and address different needs across the West Suffolk localities.</p>	<p>supporting families and communities and would look to take this approach into the new, single council. A detailed communications plan will be in place to ensure we actively engage with key partners, stakeholders and the local community to minimise any impacts.</p>
<p><b>7. Lack of support from the public</b></p>	
<p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p><b>Action/ control</b></p>
<p>This would bring a lack of credibility from residents, businesses, councillors and partners. The knock-on effect would be reduced willingness to form partnerships with a new council and a lack of public trust in the councils' ability now, or future new council's ability, to deliver public services.</p>	<p>A comprehensive communications plan will be in place and will include detailed engagement with the public. Engagement with the public will include a telephone poll with a representative sample of west Suffolk residents alongside the ability for anyone to comment. The communications plan will also include briefings with staff and politicians so that the key messages can be disseminated to and discussed with the public, local business and our partners.</p>
<p><b>8. Resistance to change among staff and councillors</b></p>	
<p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p><b>Action/ control</b></p>
<p>Difficulty trying to establish an organisation culture and potential for councillor resignations/disaffection. The message being disseminated by staff and members could be negative and this could impact on the public support for the creation of a single council. Increased employee and member dissatisfaction could lead to poor performance.</p>	<p>Our strategy for the creation of a new council will be open and transparent so that all staff and members are fully informed and engaged with at every step of the process. In addition we will work with the Unison to ensure that any staff transitional arrangements are clear and straightforward. We will have regular briefings with all members and ensure that all communication channels are used to keep members are fully informed at all times.</p>
<p><b>9. Lack of clarity on overall vision and outcomes</b></p>	
<p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p><b>Action/ control</b></p>
<p>Increased senior officer and member time to manage internal and external relationships. A lack of clarity regarding the direction of the council could also</p>	<p>We will have a clear, long term, strategic vision for the new single council. The political and officer structures and</p>

have a negative on the profile for the council and bring difficulties to service delivery. Elected members' commitment to the partnership could falter and there could be a return to the previous separate arrangements.	governance arrangements will have been established and in place ready for the first elections. We also have a performance management framework in place to ensure that the ambitions for the new council are being delivered.
<b>10. Changes in the external environment</b>	
<b>Impact</b>	<b>Action/ control</b>
New Government initiatives or policies or a change in local government reorganisation could halt or delay the creation of a single council.	We will continue to liaise with DCLG and the LGA regarding any national developments or Government announcements. Our business and service planning arrangements will remain flexible so that we can make changes to reflect the changing economic climate and political landscape.



## APPENDIX B – Equalities Impact Assessment – screening form

Question	Response						
Q1) Name of the strategy, policy, programme or project being assessed.	Proposal for the creation of a single council at district level for the area currently covered by Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC)						
Q2) In no more than five lines and using Plain English, summarise the purpose of the policy or proposal, and its desired outcomes.	A business case from the Leaders of FHDC and SEBC to test the proposal of a new, single council at district level for west Suffolk from May 2019. The business case tests whether this proposal is the best possible way to for the councils to continue to support residents, business and communities in the future.						
Q3) Who should benefit from the proposal and in what way?	<p>The following groups are likely to benefit from the creation of a single council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all residents living in the two districts (including all electors)</li> <li>• all staff employed by the two existing councils</li> <li>• all staff employed by organisations commissioned to carry out services/functions on their behalf by one (or more) of the two councils.</li> <li>• all Councillors in the two districts (27 – Forest Heath and 45 – St Edmundsbury)</li> <li>• partner organisations working with FHDC and SEBC (e.g. parish councils, VCSE organisations, community groups)</li> <li>• businesses operating in the two districts</li> <li>• businesses contracting with the councils</li> </ul>						
Q4) Is there any evidence or reason to believe that in relation to this proposal, there may be a difference in:	<table border="1" data-bbox="730 1134 2101 1209"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="730 1134 1003 1209">Protected characteristic</th> <th data-bbox="1003 1134 1552 1209">West Suffolk (%)</th> <th data-bbox="1552 1134 2101 1209">England and Wales* (%)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="3" data-bbox="730 1209 2101 1396">The demographic characteristics of residents of West Suffolk are broadly similar to those of the population of England, as follows:</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Protected characteristic	West Suffolk (%)	England and Wales* (%)	The demographic characteristics of residents of West Suffolk are broadly similar to those of the population of England, as follows:		
Protected characteristic	West Suffolk (%)	England and Wales* (%)					
The demographic characteristics of residents of West Suffolk are broadly similar to those of the population of England, as follows:							

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of participation</li> <li>• Uptake by different groups</li> <li>• Needs or experiences of different groups</li> <li>• Priorities</li> <li>• Other areas?</li> </ul>	Age	<b>Under 18</b> 20.9%	<b>Aged 65+</b> 20.1%	<b>Under 18</b> 21.3%	<b>Aged 65+</b> 17.9%
	Disability (those living with a long-term illness or disability)	15.9%		17.9%	
	Gender reassignment	Data not available		Prevalence estimates 0.1% to 0.6% of all adults.	
	Marriage and civil partnership	Married: 51% Civil partnership: 0%		Married: 46.6% Civil partnership: 0.2%	
	Pregnancy and maternity	Data not available		Data not available	
	Race	<b>White:</b> 94.6% <b>Mixed/multiple ethnic group:</b> 2% <b>Asian/Asian British:</b> 1.8% <b>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British:</b> 1.1% <b>Other ethnic group:</b> 0.5%		<b>White</b> 86.0% <b>Mixed/multiple ethnic group:</b> 2.2% <b>Asian/Asian British:</b> 7.5% <b>Black/African/Caribbean/Black British:</b> 3.3% <b>Other ethnic group:</b> 1.0%	
	Religion or belief	Has a religion: 64.5% No religion: 28.1%		Has a religion: 67.7% No religion: 25.1%	
	Sex	<b>Males</b> 50.2%	<b>Females</b> 49.8%	<b>Males</b> 49.2%	<b>Females</b> 50.8%
	Sexual orientation	Data not available for west Suffolk.		ONS 2015 data – 1.7% of UK population identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB)	

\*local government is devolved to England, but data are mostly available for England and Wales.

	<p>We would therefore not expect the proposal to impact differently on any particular group when compared to the population of England as a whole. One exception to this is that a large number of residents of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury are members or dependents of the US Armed Forces, based at RAF Lakenheath or Mildenhall. The proposals will have less impact on these people as they do not vote in local elections or pay council tax, but they do benefit from the services provided by the councils.</p>
<p>Q5) Using the evidence listed above, fill in the table below to highlight the groups you think this policy or proposal has the potential to impact upon:</p> <p>(i) Is there any potential for negative impact? Yes or No</p> <p>(ii) Are there opportunities for positive impact or to promote equality of opportunity?</p>	<p>i) No negative impacts have so far been identified. This will be reviewed following a period of public consultation and engagement. The proposals will not directly affect service delivery, or customer access.</p> <p>ii) A small beneficial impact on all groups is anticipated. Becoming a single council is estimated to generate a further £0.5 million of annual cashable savings, on top of the annual shared services savings of £4 million.</p> <p>Becoming a single council would also release some capacity as a result of a more simple and effective way of working, allowing the councils to focus on the delivery of key projects and invest in communities. There is also potential for all residents to benefit from a renewed democratic relationship with a new body, complementing the opportunity of forging new relationships with communities.</p> <p>A single west Suffolk council with a larger population, local economy and GVA would bring the councils from being 86<sup>th</sup> and 189<sup>th</sup> largest district/borough councils in England (out of 202) to around 7<sup>th</sup> largest district/borough council when combined. Having a larger council will mean having a bigger voice within the sector and with central Government.</p> <p>The creation of a new single council would also help develop new ways of working that the councils have been moving towards in recent years. This includes an emphasis on prevention, not crisis interventions, thus benefitting everyone who uses the councils' services, particularly the most vulnerable in society.</p>

<p>Q6) Considering your answers to questions 1-5, do you believe a Full Equality Impact Assessment is needed?</p>	<p>Not at this time as no negative impacts have been identified.</p>
<p>Q7) Considering our duty to proactively tackle disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity, list the actions required.</p>	<p>No actions required as no adverse impact identified.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Impacts Table</b></p>				
	<p><b>Is there potential for negative impact? YES or NO</b></p>	<p><b>Are there opportunities for positive impact? YES or NO</b></p>	<p><b>If YES, please provide details of the impact below</b></p>	
			<p><b>Positive Impact</b></p>	<p><b>Negative Impact</b></p>
<p><b>All groups or society generally</b></p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>YES</p>	<p>The opportunities for positive impact are listed above.</p>	
<p><b>Age</b> - Older or younger people</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>YES</p>		
<p><b>Disability</b> - People with a disability</p>	<p>NO</p>	<p>YES</p>		

<b>Sex</b> - Women or men	NO	YES		
<b>Pregnancy or maternity</b> - including expectant or new parents i.e. pregnancy and maternity	NO	YES		
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b> – including same sex couples	NO	YES		
<b>Race</b> - People who are black or from a minority ethnic background (BME)	NO	YES		
<b>Religion</b> - People with a religion or belief (or who choose not to have a religion or belief)	NO	YES		
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> - People who are lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB) or in a Civil Partnership	NO	YES		
<b>Gender Reassignment</b> - People who are transitioning from one gender to another	NO	YES		
<i>Families and those with parenting or caring</i>	NO	YES		

<i>responsibilities (The Families Test)</i>				
<i>Individuals on low income</i>	NO	YES		
<i>Those suffering rural isolation</i>	NO	YES		
<i>Those who do not have English as a first language</i>	NO	YES		

# Council



*St Edmundsbury*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Response to Network Rail's Proposed Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Order</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>COU/SE/17/010</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Council</b>	13 June 2017
<b>Portfolio holder:</b>	Alaric Pugh Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth <b>Tel:</b> 07930 460899 <b>Email:</b> alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	Peter White Principal Planning Officer – Major Projects <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757357 <b>Email:</b> peter.white@westsuffolk.gov.uk	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<p>The purpose of this report is to recommend to full Council that objection is formally lodged towards Network Rail's proposed Order under the Transport and Works Act 1992 which seeks to close an at grade pedestrian crossing and reopen an underpass approximately 400 metres to the west at Cattishall.</p> <p>The Department for Transport consulted on the closure of an at grade pedestrian crossing at Cattishall (immediately north of the former Flying Fortress Public House at Moreton Hall). The pedestrian crossing goes over the Ipswich to Peterborough train line linking the Parishes of Great Barton and Rushbrooke with Rougham, and Bury St Edmunds.</p> <p>A letter was sent to the Department for Transport on 4 May 2017 from Councillor Pugh as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth setting out that the Council objected and the reasons for the objection. The Department for Transport sent Councillor Pugh a letter dated the 4 May 2017 asking if the letter of objection had been ratified by the Council.</p> <p>This report seeks that ratification.</p>	

<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that the Council ratifies the letter of objection previously sent to the Department for Transport dated 4 May 2017, as contained in Appendix B to Report No: COU/SE/17/010 and therefore making a valid objection to Network Rail's proposed Transport and Works Act 1992 (Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction) Order.</b>		
<b>Key Decision:</b>  <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>	<i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i> Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<b>Consultation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See body of report below</li> </ul>		
<b>Alternative option(s):</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See body of report below</li> </ul>		
<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As required by the Transport and Works Act (TWA) 1992, a statutory notice setting out the Borough Council's intended objection to the proposed closure of the pedestrian rail crossing at Cattishall was published in the press on 26 May 2017.</li> <li>• Ratification of objection sought by full Council to accord with TWA (Applications and Objections Procedure) (England and Wales) Procedure Rules, as set out in Appendix C</li> </ul>
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	•
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
Not applicable		Not applicable	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		Great Barton, Moreton Hall and Rougham	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		None	



<b>Documents attached:</b>	<p><b>Appendix A</b> – Original Consultation document by Network Rail</p> <p><b>Appendix B</b> – Letter sent from Cllr Pugh (Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth) to the Department for Transport</p> <p><b>Appendix C</b> - Letter sent from the Department for Transport to Cllr Pugh</p>
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## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations**

- 1.1 Following consultation by Network Rail it was agreed to consult with Members in the wards affected by the proposed closure of the Cattishall at grade pedestrian crossing, with the final formal Council response being submitted by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth. That consultation was sent out on 31 March 2017 which sought a response by 17 April 2017. Within this email a link to the Network Rail consultation was attached and the two page consultation document is attached now at Appendix A. An additional email was sent on 4 April 2017 to the same Members outlining some of the concerns and setting out the wider background, ongoing dialogue and reasons why it was considered that the Council should object to the proposal. It should be noted that Councillor Broughton was not contacted as Councillor Mildmay-White deputises for Councillor Broughton on matters which affect the strategic housing allocation at Bury St Edmunds NE.
- 1.2 None of the Members who were consulted on 31 March and 4 April contacted officers concerning this matter and so it was considered that the issues raised by officers sufficiently covered the necessary matters and to object to the Department for Transport.
- 1.3 As such, a letter was sent from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Growth on 4 May 2017 to the Department for Transport and that letter is attached at Appendix B.
- 1.4 An immediate response from the Department for Transport was sent to Councillor Pugh (see Appendix C) asking for the decision to object to the proposal be ratified by full Council if that had not already occurred. This paper now seeks that ratification. The issues and reasons for the objection are fully set out in the original letter from Councillor Pugh in Appendix B.

# Anglia Level Crossing Proposals

## S25 – Cattishall (Great Barton Parish)

### Public Right of Way Reference – W-234/012/0

#### APPENDIX A

Network Rail has been working hard to better manage its level crossings and the risks they pose. It has developed proposals for the possible closure or change to public rights of way at around 130 level crossings in Anglia. Closing or modifying level crossings can help to bring about a number of benefits:

- Improve the safety of level crossing users
- Deliver a more efficient and reliable railway, which is vital in supporting the regional and UK economy
- Reduce the ongoing operating and maintenance cost of the railway
- Reduce delays to trains, pedestrians and other highway users
- Improve journey time reliability for railway, highway and other rights of way users

The level crossings in this initial phase of the Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy do not include any new bridges or underpasses, and offer benefits which are currently affordable and deliverable.

**Cattishall** is one of the level crossings in the County of Suffolk. It is located in Great Barton Parish and has the postcode IP31 2QU. This is a stop, look and listen public footpath level crossing where the user has to decide whether it is safe to cross. The railway at this crossing carries passenger and freight trains with a line speed of 75 mph. There are generally 110 trains passing through this level crossing per day.

Network Rail's level crossing risk assessments are supported by use of the All Level Crossing Risk Model (ALCRM). This produces a score for the 'individual risk' presented as a letter ranging from A to M, where A is the highest risk and M is the lowest. In addition 'collective risk' is based on the number of people who use the crossing, and is presented as a number ranging from 1 to 13, where 1 is the highest risk and 13 is the lowest. Cattishall level crossing currently has an ALCRM score of C4 which is considered high risk. Key issues relate to large numbers of users, frequent trains, and sun glare. There were no incidents of misuse, 5 near misses and 3 accidents at this crossing between 2011 and 2015.

**Public consultation** was undertaken in June on initial options for changes at this level crossing. At this level crossing, Thirteen questionnaire responses were received. For Cattishall a summary of the questionnaire responses is shown below (route colours refer to the June 2016 Stage 1 consultation plan – please see the project website for details):

- 54 % agreed with the proposals
- 23 % of responses were neutral towards the proposals
- 23 % of responses disagreed with the proposals
- 31 % supported the red route
- 54 % supported the blue route
- 15 % of responses preferred another route

One respondent requested that the stage 1 consultation red route is modified to a more direct route along a path in a southerly direction south of the under bridge to Mount Road. One respondent commented that the use of the existing underpass would greatly improve safety with minimum adverse effects.

As part of the consultation process a wide range of statutory consultees, landowners and user groups were also consulted. The responses received have been taken into account when determining the preferred option.

During June and July of this year, Network Rail undertook new census surveys of the number and type of level crossing users. A three day census was undertaken (Saturday, Sunday and Monday) and the daily usage was as follows:

Weekday (Monday)	38 pedestrians
Weekend (average daily)	19 pedestrians

The consultation feedback together with a range of other factors such as user safety and convenience, environmental impacts and economic factors were used to determine a preferred option. In this case, an amended version of the blue route shown at the June 2016 Stage 1 consultation has been taken forward.

**Our preferred option is to** close the level crossing to all users. Crossing infrastructure would be removed and fencing installed to prevent trespass onto the railway. Users would be diverted on a new public track in farm fields on the north side of the railway which would provide a link to Mount Road via an existing railway underpass and the shared cycle/foot path. This would be suitable for use as a cycle trail.

#### Diversion lengths:

- If travelling from Green Lane to Cherry Trees on Mount Road the diversion will add an additional 300m to the route.

**Photo 1: Existing level crossing - Cattishall**



**Photo 2: Alternative railway crossing - underpass**

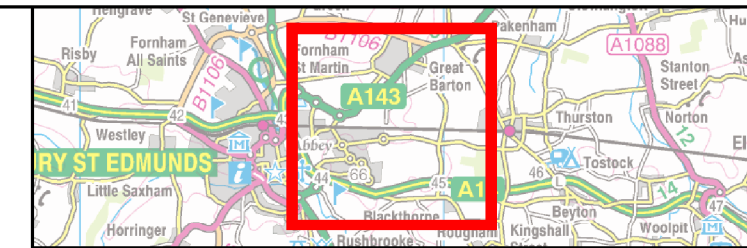
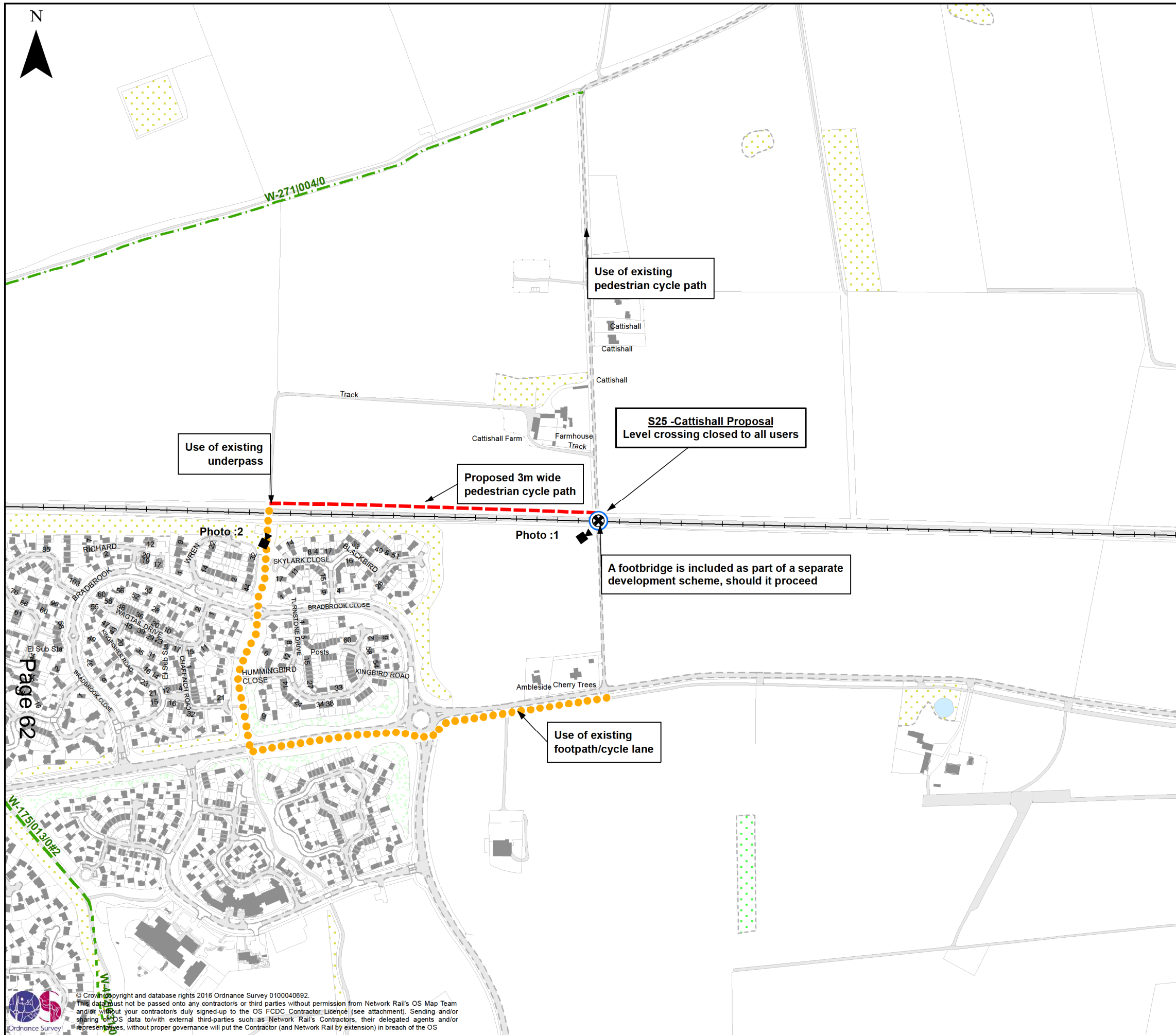


Photo locations are shown on the plan overleaf.

This summary sheet and a questionnaire are available at the public exhibitions and on the project website at: [www.networkrail.co.uk/anglialevelcrossings](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/anglialevelcrossings). Please complete the separate questionnaire using the level crossing identification number **S25** and your feedback will be considered before the proposals are finalised ahead of submitting a Transport and Works Act Order to the Secretary of State.

To contact our team, please email us at: [anglialevelcrossings@networkrail.co.uk](mailto:anglialevelcrossings@networkrail.co.uk) or phone the helpline: **03457 11 41 41**. We thank you for your time and providing your comments on the Anglia Level Crossing Proposals.





- Level Crossings**
- Level crossing being discussed
  - Other level crossing in the project
  - Other level crossing not in the project

- Right of Way / Other Route Type**
- Footpath
  - Bridleway
  - Restricted byway
  - Byway open to all traffic
  - Highway (shown where used as part of a diversion)
  - Private Road / Track (shown where used as part of a diversion route)
- The line styles above indicate the type of right of way or other route proposed.
- The colours below indicate the nature of the proposal.

- Right of Way / Other Route Status**
- No Change and not part of diversion route
  - Use of Existing right of way for diversion route
  - Change of Status to right of way
  - Closure of existing right of way
  - Creation of new right of way

- Photographs**
- Photograph Location (with no. - see Summary Sheet for details)

**NetworkRail** Anglia Level Crossing Reduction Strategy  
 Round 2 Public Consultation Proposal

S25 - Cattishall  
 Suffolk  
 Great Barton CP

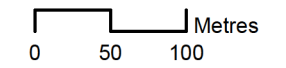
P1	16/08/2016	For Information	WC	DW	SJT	JAS
Rev	Date	Description	Dwn	E Chk	Ch'k'd	App'd

Scale at A3  
 1:5,000

Drawing No.  
 MMD-367516-S25-GEN-003

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Email: [Alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk](mailto:Alaric.pugh@stedsbc.gov.uk)

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP  
Secretary of State for Transport c/o  
Transport and Works Act Orders Unit  
General Counsel's Office  
Department for Transport - Zone 1/18  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DR

Date: 4 May 2017

Dear Sir

**The Proposed Network Rail (Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction) Order  
Transport and Works Act 1992  
The Transport and Works (Applications and Objections Procedure)  
(England and Wales) Rules 2006**

I am writing on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council in response to Network Rail's proposed Suffolk Level Crossing Reduction Order. St Edmundsbury Borough Council remains broadly supportive of improved services, faster line speeds, better connectivity and Network Rail's ambitions behind the level crossing closure programme. However, with regards to level crossing S25 Cattishall, we object to the current proposal which appears to completely ignore advanced and meaningful discussions that Network Rail are having with Berkeley Strategic which would result in this crossing being replaced with a new steps only bridge entirely at the cost of Berkeley Strategic.

It is understood from discussions with Steve Day at Network Rail (Liability and Negotiations Manager) that this closure is being proposed now because, amongst other reasons, Network Rail are aware that to the North of the railway line is a strategic housing allocation of 1,250 homes which will increase the amount of pedestrians using this crossing. However, the council feels this is an unfounded fear because it is highly unlikely that any of these dwellings will be occupied in the next 30 months at least (3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Q 2019). This estimation is based on the fact that Berkeley Strategic are hoping to submit an application in Oct 2017, the application will probably take at least six months to be determined by the LPA (April 2018) then there will probably be at least 12 months of discharging of

conditions / raising finance / acquisition of the land/ organising a workforce/ materials etc (April 2019). Earliest start on dwellings April 2019 and occupation October – Dec 2019.

It is understood that Berkeley and Network Rail have agreed a deal in principle whereby within 12 months of Berkeley being granted planning permission they will pay all of the money needed for Network Rail to construct the bridge. If we assume Network Rail will therefore have this money before or at the same time as Berkeley Strategic start building homes it is reasonable to believe that Network Rail will be able to open a new bridge and close the crossing prior to any of the dwellings being occupied. In addition it is understood that the legal agreement would enable NR to reopen the underpass which would reduce the amount of people currently using the crossing. To that end it is extremely frustrating that Network Rail are consulting on this closure and forcing the Borough to spend time and energy objecting to their proposal when discussions between Network Rail and Berkeley Strategic to fund a replacement bridge are so advanced.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council object to the proposal for the following reasons:

### **1. Replacement Bridge**

As discussed above the council are aware that Berkeley Strategic the developer of the 1,250 houses at Bury St Edmunds North East have been having very good discussions with Network Rail. They are nearing completion on a set of legal agreements which will require:

- The developer to pay Network Rail a sum of money to Network Rail can construct a new steps only bridge that will replace the current at level crossing.
- The developer will pay all costs associated with opening up of an old underpass which is located some 400 metres to the west of the current crossing and providing new routes to it.
- The developer will pay Network Rail a commercial sum of money to allow this new route across their track.

The bridge will cost circa £1 million and would be installed by Network Rail.

Officers attended a meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017 to discuss the potential design of a bridge with the network rail engineers so this is more evidence that these discussions are advanced and meaningful.

### **2. Managing congestion**

Managing congestion is perhaps the number one issue for many residents and businesses in and around Bury St Edmunds. The development at Bury North East is very close to the new Suffolk Business Park and new secondary School on the Moreton Hall Estate and it is expected that new infrastructure will allow more people to walk and cycle to those and other destinations. However, if residents don't feel they can cross the railway line then the journey would be a lot longer

and walking and cycling will become significantly less attractive. So much so that if new residents don't want to use the Victorian underpass they would be left with no alternative but to get in their cars and add to the congestion on the highway network.

The same issue would arise if the underpass became closed for any length of time (because of flooding or structural safety fears). Residents would not have an alternative and so would either be isolated or be forced to drive.

In addition the new 500 homes that Taylor Wimpey (TW) is building at Moreton Hall have been designed around a crossing being in place. The TW scheme provides a green link from Mount Road to the crossing. Without the crossing the green route becomes a link to nowhere. It is frustrating that the council has planned its strategic developments, some of which are now being built out and Network Rail are now trying to use their Compulsory Purchase Order powers to close this essential link on safety grounds when the Borough Council, Berkeley Strategic and County Council have been working hard to deliver a crossing that does not involve people walking on the rail network.

### **3. Policy conflict**

When the council adopted its Core Strategy which allocated the Bury NE site the allocating policy (CS11) set out that the development should **"Provide improved public transport, foot and cycle links to the town centre and south towards the A14 and strategic employment sites;"**

The council disagrees strongly that if this crossing was closed and the underpass opened that this would form an improvement. The underpass will always be considered unattractive by certain individuals who may have otherwise found the openness of the at grade crossing acceptable. It would be unacceptable to the council if people who otherwise would have walked or cycled across current crossing felt they had drive because they felt intimidated by the underpass as their only option.

### **4. Access to the countryside**

The existing TW scheme of 500 homes has been designed around utilising the Cattishall crossing. This crossing gives residents direct access to the Countryside which is extremely important for health and wellbeing. Access to the countryside can be for a walk occasionally or can be used daily for walking a dog. By closing this crossing the council feels that it will make accessing the countryside harder for new residents and therefore unacceptable.

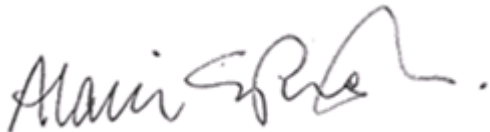
### **Conclusion**

The council remains of the position that it wishes to work with Network Rail, Berkeley Strategic and Suffolk County Council to bring forward a new steps only bridge that replaces the at grade crossing and open up the underpass.

However, the council remains extremely concerned that Network Rail appears to be working towards a situation where there is no crossing at Cattishall. Network Rail appears to be solely focused on closing the crossing at Cattishall and

opening up the underpass. What comfort can Network Rail give the council that it will continue to work with the council and Berkeley to deliver a bridge. The council can not understand why Network Rail is not able to acknowledge the bridge option which appears to be forcing St Edmundsbury Borough Council to object to this proposal. The council wishes to work with Network Rail to deliver a bridge replacement and does not wish to object but the actions of Network Rail to date do not leave any other option available to the council.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alaric Pugh', followed by a period.

Cllr Alaric Pugh  
Cabinet Member for Planning and Growth

Cc:  
Jo Churchill MP  
Cllr Sara Mildmay-White  
Rougham and Rushbrooke Parish Council  
Gt Barton Parish Council  
Bury St Edmunds Town Council  
Cllr Griffiths – Leader of St Edmundsbury Borough Council  
Elizabeth Burt, Berkeley Strategic  
Steve Day, Network Rail  
Andrew Woodin – Rights of Way and Access Manager, Suffolk County Council  
Cllr James Finch – Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Suffolk County Council





# Department for Transport

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Suffolk  
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Web Site: [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

Our Ref: TWA/17/APP/04/OBJ/28  
Your Ref:

4 May 2017

Dear Sir,

**TRANSPORT AND WORKS ACT 1992 (TWA):  
APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED NETWORK RAIL (SUFFOLK LEVEL  
CROSSING REDUCTION) ORDER**

1. Thank you for your letter of 4 May 2017 on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council to the Secretary of State for Transport objecting to this application. We shall take this into account in considering the application and shall send a copy of it to the applicants for the Order as required by the TWA procedure Rules. Please note that the Rules enable us to let others have a copy (including any personal information contained in it) if they ask for one.

2. I enclose for your information a brief guide to TWA Orders. This explains the procedure for considering order applications and how you can take part in the process if you wish to do so.

3 Part 3 of the guide (page 13) explains that where there are objections to a scheme we may decide to hold a public inquiry or a hearing, or to deal with them by an exchange of written representations. A decision on this will normally be made within 28 days of the end of the objection period.

4 It is not clear from your letter of objection whether it has been ratified by the whole Council in accordance with the procedures set out in section 239 of the Local Government Act 1972. That section, although originally concerned only with local authorities promoting or opposing a Bill in Parliament, has been applied by section 20 of the TWA to local authorities applying for, or objecting to, a TWA Order. This means that, for a local authority to make a valid objection, it has to have been endorsed by a majority of the whole number of the authority's members at a meeting of the authority, held after the requisite notice of that meeting has been given.

5. If it has not been possible for you to bring this matter before a full meeting of your Council within the statutory objection period, we are prepared nevertheless to accept your Council's representation as a holding objection, provided that it is endorsed by the full Council as soon as reasonably possible. Similarly, if it is the case that you were not aware that section 239 of the 1972 Act applied to TWA Order applications and objections, we are prepared provisionally to accept the objection pending the passing of the relevant resolution.

6. If your Council has already passed the section 239 resolution, please could you confirm that and provide a certified copy of the resolution. If, however, your Council has still to pass the resolution, please advise us when the full Council meeting is to be held and the outcome of the debate.

7. To help us to decide which procedure to follow please let me know within two weeks from the date of this letter if you wish to speak or be represented at an inquiry or hearing, if one is held. Part 4 of the guide (page 18) explains what is involved in giving evidence at an inquiry. If you do not wish to speak at an inquiry, you may still send further written evidence to the Inspector, preferably before any inquiry opens.

8. At question 12, the guide explains that certain types of objector are classed as 'statutory objectors' and have certain additional rights. If you are a statutory objector and wish to exercise the right to have your objection heard, please inform us when letting us know that you wish to take part in any inquiry or hearing.

9. If we do not hear from you, we shall assume that you are content to rely on the comments that you have already made. Your objection will, as required by the TWA procedure Rules, be sent to the Inspector appointed to conduct any inquiry or hearing.

10. Please let me know if you require any further advice about these procedures and please keep the brief guide available, as we shall refer to it when writing to you again.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Caroline O'Neill". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Caroline O'Neill**

# Council



St Edmundsbury  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Appointment of Independent Persons</b>	
<b>Report No:</b>	<b>COU/SE/17/011</b>	
<b>Report to and date:</b>	<b>Council</b>	13 June 2017
<b>Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee</b>	<p>David Bowman Chairman, West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee <b>Tel:</b> 07711 593737 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk">david.bowman@forest-heath.gov.uk</a></p> <p>John Burns Vice-Chairman, West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee <b>Tel:</b> 01440 762994 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:john.burns@stedsbc.gov.uk">john.burns@stedsbc.gov.uk</a></p>	
<b>Lead officer:</b>	<p>Leah Mickleborough Service Manager (Democratic Services) and Monitoring Officer <b>Tel:</b> 01284 757162 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:leah.mickleborough@westsuffolk.gov.uk">leah.mickleborough@westsuffolk.gov.uk</a></p>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	This report seeks Council approval to appoint Independent Persons for West Suffolk	
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p><b>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that Council:</b></p> <p><b>(1) Agrees to re-appoint Mr Arnold Barrow as an Independent Person until 1 July 2019; and</b></p> <p><b>(2) Agrees to appoint Mrs Zoe Finn as an Independent Person until 1 July 2019</b></p>	
<b>Key Decision:</b> <i>(Check the appropriate box and delete all those that <b>do not</b> apply.)</i>	<p><i>Is this a Key Decision and, if so, under which definition?</i></p> <p>Yes, it is a Key Decision - <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No, it is not a Key Decision - <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	
<b>Consultation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee have been informed of the proposed appointment directly</li> </ul>	

<b>Alternative option(s):</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council is required to have an Independent Person as a result of the Localism Act. Were Council minded not to approve the current appointment, a temporary solution would be required until a new appointment process could be undertaken</li> </ul>	
<b>Implications:</b>			
Are there any <b>financial</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>staffing</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>ICT</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Are there any <b>legal and/or policy</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed appointment ensures the Council is compliant with its obligations under the Localism Act 2011</li> </ul>	
Are there any <b>equality</b> implications? <i>If yes, please give details</i>		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Risk/opportunity assessment:</b>		<i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>	
<b>Risk area</b>	<b>Inherent level of risk</b> (before controls)	<b>Controls</b>	<b>Residual risk</b> (after controls)
The Independent Person fails to provide informed and carefully considered judgements, resulting in a loss of public confidence in the standards system	Low	The independent appointment process has been robust, and appropriate training is provided to independent persons to ensure they are fully aware of the responsibilities	Low
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>		All wards	
<b>Background papers:</b> <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>		<a href="#">Report No: JST/JT/17/001: West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee on the process to appoint an Independent Person</a>	
<b>Documents attached:</b>		None	

## **1. Key issues and reasons for recommendations**

- 1.1.1 The Localism Act created the requirement for all authorities to appoint an Independent Person who must give their thoughts on allegations that a Parish, Town or District Councillor has breached the Code of Conduct. In addition, should the Council decide to take disciplinary action against its statutory officers, a panel, including at least two Independent Persons, may need to be convened. The appointment of Independent Persons must be confirmed by a Council vote.
- 1.1.2 St Edmundsbury Borough Council originally joined the Suffolk-wide pool of Independent Persons, but in 2014 a separate appointment process was undertaken for the two West Suffolk councils alone. As a result, two Independent Persons – Mrs Joy Inameti and Mr Arnold Barrow were appointed. Mrs Inameti has recently confirmed that she does not intend to continue in the role and Mr Barrow’s appointment would also be due to expire.
- 1.1.3 Mr Arnold Barrow has consistently provided a robust opinion to the matters in hand on a timely basis, and it is proposed by the West Suffolk Joint Standards Committee to continue his appointment. This will also help to ensure continuity and consistency as the new Independent Person adapts to the role.
- 1.1.4 The Standards Committee agreed an appointment process for the vacancy left by Mrs Inameti. A number of high-quality applications were received, and four candidates were shortlisted for interviews, undertaken by the Monitoring Officer, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee. Following this process, it is now recommended that Mrs Zoe Finn be appointed by Council.
- 1.1.5 Mrs Finn has a long history of public service, having first worked as a psychiatric nurse in Wales, before retraining as a Police Officer and serving in Thames Valley, Essex and Suffolk, finishing at Detective Inspector level. Subsequently, she has retrained as a plumber and now runs her own plumbing business. She lives in West Suffolk, and impressed the interview panel with her balanced views between the need to follow due procedure whilst recognising the sensitivity of the situations that can arise and the challenges Councillors faced.
- 1.1.6 It is proposed to make both appointments until 1 July 2019, to align with the current electoral term.

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